King's Guard

KARA FLYNN

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Chapter One

Kingsley couldn't pinpoint the exact moment he zoned out. There he was, sitting on his chair around the round conference table, watching as his boss, and the CEO of the start-up he worked at, start his presentation.

He tried to pay attention, he really did. At least at the beginning of the meeting. But ten minutes in, Lorenzo took off his suit jacket and folded the sleeves of his perfectly ironed white shirt up till his elbows. Kingsley's eyes moved from his face to his arms and then to his chest. He couldn't help it, the man was truly a work of art.

Most of the men Kingsley had dated, that is if you could count having one-night stands as dating, had been men in their early twenties, young and lean and energetic. But Lorenzo was different from his usual type. He was twenty seven, four years older than Kingsley. He had an MBA from an ivy league college, and had started his own business at the age of twenty-two.

Lorenzo was tall, and Kingsley didn't need to see him naked to tell that he was definitely muscular under those clothes he wore. Sandy brown hair, a square jaw and a light stubble— he was no where near the type of scrawny guys Kingsley usually hooked up with.

Kingsley had never really had any interest in men that were, well, bigger than him. But he would do just about anything to feel Lorenzo on top of him, doing things that Kingsley could only fantasize about in his wildest dreams.

"Reece? Reece?" Lorenzo called out Kingsley's first name twice, finally breaking him from his trance. Kingsley straightened his back as he looked at his boss, who was staring at him with a frown on his face.

"Yes, Mr. Salazar?" Kingsley replied.

"I was asking if you'd be okay with this?" Lorenzo asked, and Kingsley blinked. He had no idea what his boss was talking about, and asking now

would definitely get him in trouble.

"Yeah, of course, sir," Kingsley answered. Lorenzo rose an eyebrow for a split second, before going back to his presentation.

"Can't believe you said yes," Nina whispered. Kingsley looked to his side, at the woman who had an extremely amused expression on her face.

"And what exactly did I say yes to?" Kingsley asked her in an equally low voice. Thankfully Lorenzo was facing the projector screen as he pointed at his powerpoint presentation.

"You're kidding, right?" Nina deadpanned, a look of disbelief on her face as she looked at her friend. Kingsley just shrugged in response, making her sigh.

"You really need to start paying attention in meetings," Nina said, "you agreed to working overtime the next two weeks to help Lorenzo with his presentation for the meeting with the investors."

"Overtime? Two weeks?" Kingsley's eyes widened as he stared at the woman, "fucking hell."

"Say hello to long nights alone with the boss," Nina muttered before leaning away.

Kingsley subconsciously licked his lower lip as he thought about what Nina said. Sure, working late continuously for two weeks would absolutely suck. But that also meant he'd be alone with Lorenzo. And *that* was something that could make it all worth it.

Even though he had been working in the company for around fourteen months, Kingsley never really spoke to Lorenzo much. Nothing except work, at least. It was a small office, and there were only about twenty employees. Most were older people, in their thirties or forties. Kingsley, along with a couple others, as well as Lorenzo were the only ones in their twenties.

Despite being in the same age group, Lorenzo maintained a strict professional boundary with all of his employees. He did occasionally accompany them for lunches and dinners, but that was more out of formal obligation than actual interest in socialization.

Lorenzo was a very well reserved man, and that only made Kingsley all the more curious about what was behind those walls.

The meeting was over not long after that, and Kinsgley had to ask Nina for a walk through of what happened. Nina gave him attitude, but helped him out nonetheless.

"What are you doing tonight?" Anwar, another of Kinsgley's colleagues, asked as he wrapped his arm around Kingsley's shoulder.

"Catching up on my sleep," Kingsley answered.

"Now that you're going to practically be sleeping in the office from Monday — how about we head to a club tonight and let it loose?" Anwar grinned.

Kingsley liked his co-workers slash friends, but there was only so much of them that he could tolerate in a week. It was Friday night, and he really just wanted to head home, take a nice long bubble bath with a glass of wine, have some ribs, and then fall asleep while watching a sit-com.

"Maybe some other night," Kingsley replied smoothly as he packed up his things.

"Come on, Kinsgley, you never go out with us anymore! You always have plans but you just said you don't tonight!" Anwar persisted.

Fuck, Kingsley thought, *I walked right into this one.*

"Fine, but I'm heading home by eleven," Kingsley finally agreed. Anwar happily patted his shoulder as he moved away.

"Awesome! See you in the lobby in ten minutes," Anwar said.

Kingsley just grunted in response. Anwar was walking to his own desk when Lorenzo exited his office, running into the Persian man.

"Hey boss! We're heading to the Flaming Bird, would you like to join us?" Anwar asked.

It was just a formality out of basic politeness, they always asked Lorenzo if he'd like to come along, and he *always* said no, claiming he still had work. Which wasn't a lie, the man was a raging workaholic.

"I have—"

"Nina, Miles and I are going, oh, and Kingsley too," Anwar interrupted him.

"Oh, sure, what time are you guys heading out?" Lorenzo answered. Anwar blinked in surprise at the man, no one expected him to say yes.

"Uh, like right about now?" Anwar replied, and Lorenzo nodded.

"I'll see you all downstairs."

Lorenzo left to go back to his office, and Anwar turned around to face Nina and Kingsley. He mouthed a 'what the fuck?' and the others just shrugged in response.

All of a sudden, Kingsley was *very* excited of what the night had in store for him.

The club wasn't too far from their office building, so just a while later they were all seated around a table, with beers in their hands. It was a little awkward with Lorenzo there. Nina and Anwar were absolute party animals, but with their boss there— they had to keep their wild side in check.

Kingsley didn't talk much as he dragged on his beer for as long as he could. He shamelessly kept staring at Lorenzo, which the man seemed to have noticed as he met his eyes a handful of times.

An hour later, Lorenzo announced that he was leaving. There were protests around the table, but Lorenzo insisted that he had plans the next morning

and wanted to call it an early night.

As soon as the boss left, Anwar ordered a round of shots. Miles ordered the second round, and then they kept coming one after the other. Everyone except Kinsgley was on the dance floor, plastered as fuck.

Kingsley was drunk too, but he wasn't big on dancing so he remained seated. Nina and Miles were getting quite close as they danced together, making Kinsgley roll his eyes. Everyone in the office knew they had a thing for each other, but neither of them would ever make a move. It was starting to get exhausting.

Kingsley's eyes fell on a man sitting a few tables away. He was just his type, cute, lean, and with a million dollar smile. He reminded Kingsley of his ex-boyfriend from high school, which brought back a dull pain in his chest.

Eye contact was made, and Kingsley had frequented clubs enough to know when someone was interested. The man motioned his head towards the dance floor, and Kingsley finally got up from his chair. He didn't dance, but he knew he had to move along the music for a few minutes as he worked his magic to get himself laid.

"I'm Luke," the man said as he moved his body. Kingsley was behind him, resting his hands on the other man's waist.

"Cute name," Kingsley replied. He knew he should've introduced himself too, but he couldn't care much about that considering it was just going to be a one-night stand.

Kingsley grounded his hardened member against Luke's ass, making him moan lightly. Luke grabbed Kingsley's hand, and started pulling him away in the direction of the restrooms. Kingsley happily followed.

Their lips were attacking each other's, a hungry kiss as they moved inside the restroom. Kingsley flicked the lock, as the two of them made out. Kingsley snaked his hand underneath Luke's shirt, flicking his nipples, which made him moan in the kiss.

Luke started unzipping Kingsley's pants, and within the span of a minute, he was on his knees— with Kingsley's dick in his mouth. Kingsley closed his eyes as he rested his hand on Luke's head, tangling his fingers in his hair as he slowly guided him.

Kingsley was sure, well, somewhat sure that he had locked the restroom door. Or had at least attempted to do so. So, when the door opened, and his boss stood in front of him with a shocked expression on his face— Kingsley froze.

Luke hadn't noticed that somebody had walked in, and continued sucking on Kingsley's member that had suddenly become even harder than before. Kingsley's shock wore off before Lorenzo's, as he gripped Luke's hair tighter.

Lorenzo stared at Kingsley with wide eyes as the latter held Luke's head and started thrusting in his mouth. Kingsley didn't break his eye contact with his boss for even a moment, as he fucked another man's face.

He was drunk, both on alcohol and on lust. Not for the man that was blowing him in the restroom of a dingy club, but for the man that he had spent the last year thirsting over. That was watching him with so much intensity.

Luke increased his speed, and sucked on Kingsley's tip with such force that the man couldn't help but shut his eyes, tilt his head back against the wall and groan in pleasure.

When Kingsley opened his eyes again, Lorenzo was no where to be seen.

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the Kingsley book is finally here!! three things to note

1 - this is a spin-off of Tense, but is a standalone and you don't require reading Tense to read this. it ideally shouldn't contain any spoilers of Tense either.

2 - sadly, Kai and Roan won't be in this book. maybe a little mention or appearance here and there— but this is Kingsley's story. if you want to read more of Kai and Roan, then check out Delicate instead.

3 - what do you guys think about me posting King's Guard on Patreon as well? it'll still be available on Wattpad, but I can post faster and more frequent updates over there. I'm a broke college student at the end of the day so that would be helpful lol

edit : I've made a patreon account (http://www.patreon.com/howtosellmysoul) the link is in my bio as well!

Chapter Two

Kinsgley woke up with a groan. His head was pounding and his dry throat was even more painful. He grabbed the water bottle on his nightstand, to find that it was empty. He got up from the bed, and walked to the kitchen, struggling to keep his eyes open.

He cursed himself for drinking as much as he did last night. His days of consuming endless alcohol and waking up feeling nothing were over the moment he graduated from college. Now he had a killer hangover, and he knew he'd be spending his weekend staying indoors- watching netflix, napping and playing video games.

As he chugged an entire bottle of water, the events of last night played in his head. He had gone to that man's apartment- what was his name? Liam? Louis? No, Luke!

They had their fun, and Kingsley sneaked out as soon as the other man had fallen asleep. But that was not all that happened- Kingsley remember Lorenzo's face when his boss walked in the restroom, just in time to watch Kingsley recieve a blowjob.

And how had Kingsley responded? Instead of pulling away and covering himself, he had thrusted into Luke's mouth even harder. If Lorenzo wanted to watch, then Kingsley was ready to give him a show.

But did he want to watch? Or was he just shocked and frozen on the spot because of the surprise? Kingsley really couldn't tell from his reaction, and the memory was also a little hazy, thanks to all that tequila that Miles kept ordering.

Fuck, Kingsley muttered as he thought about having to face Lorenzo in the office on Monday. Having to be normal in front of the other employees wasn't going to be hard, but he also agreed to working overtime with Lorenzo *alone* . How was he supposed to act then?

"Maybe I should just quit," Kingsley said to himself, "not like I need the job, anyway."

That was true. Both of Kingsley's parents were loaded. And he was their only son. He lived in a penthouse that his father had named after him, and drove a Rolls Royce his mother had given him as a graduation present after school. Nobody at work knew, though. He usually either took the subway, or carpooled with his best friend, Roan, to work.

The only reason Kingsley was working an entry level job was because he wanted to do *something* with his life. And also, he had sort of applied as a joke. He wasn't even serious about it until he went for the interview. But the moment he saw Lorenzo Salazar for the first time- he changed his mind.

In all honesty, Kingsley had planned on seducing the man, and then leaving the job in a month. But as he started working with Lorenzo, he couldn't help but be mesmerised by how charming the man was. How headstrong, confident and intelligent he was. Kingsley's plans were long forgotten, and he eventually started enjoying his job.

The weekend passed by in a blur, and before he knew it- Kingsley was back at his desk, working on a mind-numbingly boring report. Thankfully, Kingsley hadn't run into Lorenzo yet, but that changed soon.

"Reece? May I see you in my office?" Lorenzo asked. Kingsley looked up at the taller man, who had a flat look on his face.

"Sure," Kingsley answered.

"Now," Lorenzo said as he cleared his throat, "please."

Kingsley didn't reply, and simply got up from his chair as he followed Lorenzo into his office. His office was at the corner of the floor, the walls were concrete, and the glass door was fairly translucent.

Lorenzo sat down on his chair, and Kingsley got seated in front of him. Just Lorenzo's wide desk between them, the desk where Kinsgley had fantasised himself multiple times being-

"I wanted to talk to you about friday," Lorenzo stated. Kingsley subconsciously straightened his shoulders, as he looked at his boss with a matching blank expression.

"What about friday, sir?" Kingsley asked. He was definitely not going to be the one to address what happened first.

"I wanted to..." Lorenzo paused briefly, "thank you for agreeing to work on the presentation with me. I understand that it's going to be very hectic, but you'll be compensated fairly for the overtime work."

"Right," Kingsley narrowed his eyes slightly, "it's not a problem."

"We can work in my office. I want you here by 5, or earlier if both of us are done with our work before time," Lorenzo ordered.

"Of course, sir," Kingsley gave him a nod.

"I would also like you to accompany me to the meeting with the investors," Lorenzo said.

"Me? And not Ms. Sharma?" Kingsley asked. Jiya Sharma was one of the highest ranking employees after Lorenzo, and had been working there ever since Lorenzo founded the start-up.

"No. Since you'll be the one helping me with the presentation, it's only fair if you're there to give it with me. I hope that's okay?" Lorenzo questioned back.

"Yeah, sounds good," Kinsgley replied, "sir."

Lorenzo got up from his chair and walked over to the door. He opened it and faced Kingsley, looking at the man with an intent look on his face. Kingsley took that as his very obvious cue to leave, and stood up to exit.

Just as he was about to walk out the door, Lorenzo grabbed his arm, just above his elbow, to stop him when he was right in front of his boss.

"Also, the next time you decide to hook up with someone in a public place, at least make sure you lock the room," Lorenzo's voice was barely a whisper, and a shiver went down Kingsley's spine as he felt his boss's warm breath against his ear.

Kingsley whipped his head towards Lorenzo, whose face was still devoid of any emotion. Kingsley visibly gulped as Lorenzo let go of his arm. Lorenzo raised his brows, and the younger man finally looked away. He didn't turn back as he walked to the other end of the floor where his cubicle was.

Kingsley had always taken pride in himself being utterly blunt and shameless. There wasn't much that embarassed him. He pressed his palm against his cheek, feeling how hot his face had gotten, almost as if he had a fever.

But he wasn't sick. Far from that. Unless you counted wanting your boss to bend you over his desk and fuck you senseless as an illness. In that case, Kingsley needed to get hospitalised yesterday.

"Hey, how long till you're done with the Gyver report?" Nina asked as she leaned back on her chair, enough so she could peek into Kingsley's cubicle.

"I'll have it ready before lunch," Kinsgley answered.

"Cool, we were all thinking of going to that new Thai place by the corner for lunch. Wanna join?" Nina asked.

"Sure," Kingsley answered. He had a packed lunch, but he wanted to get some air and space from the office, "I need a smoke break."

"I didn't know you smoked," Miles piped in from the other side of Kingsley.

Kingsley rolled his eyes, Miles always managed to jump in any conversation with Nina. And the fact that Kingsley's desk was right between theirs- meant that he was often caught up in the middle of their longing looks and suggestive sentences.

"I don't, but I just might take it up if it means I can walk out anytime for breaks," Kingsley muttered.

Kingsley tried his best to focus on the report after that, and thankfully he was done by lunch. They were all walking to the restaurant, when Kingsley grabbed Nina's arm to slow her down. When the two of them were a little behind the best, so that they were out of hearing range, Kingsley spoke up.

"Did Lorenzo come back that night?" Kingsley asked

"Come back where?" Nina tilted her head slightly in confusion.

"To the club," Kingsley clarified.

"Oh, yeah! He had forgotten his reading glasses, so he came back for them," Nina recalled.

"Ah, fuck," Kingsley muttered as he looked away.

"Why? What happened?" Nina asked, getting a little suspicious, "you weren't there when he came back, so how did you know?"

"We ran into each other in the restroom, so I was just wondering," Kingsley answered, not giving any other details.

"Oh, why didn't you-"

"Can you both stop gossiping and hurry up?" Anwar called out. Kingsley rolled his eyes, but was grateful nonetheless, he really didn't want to tell anyone about what happened on friday night.

Kingsley was looking over the menu, deciding what to get for lunch when his phone buzzed. He unlocked the screen, and it was a mail from Lorenzo.

Received the Gyver report. Well done.

Looking forward to working directly with you tonight.

Best,
Lorenzo

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Chapter Three

"-I sent you some slides a couple hours ago, did you have a chance to look through them?" Lorenzo asked as he got seated next to Kingsley.

Kingsley went to Lorenzo's office once he was done with his work, and then the two decided that it was probably best to work in the conference room. Since it was bigger and would give them the space to work side by side. Everyone else had already left to go back home, and it was just the two of them on the entire floor.

"No, sorry, I didn't get the time," Kingsley answered.

"That's okay, go through them now and let me know what you think. I know two weeks seems excessive to work on a single presentation but this is a *very* important meeting, so I want to be thorough in the preparation," Lorenzo stated.

"Noted, sir," Kingsley replied with a nod as he opened the slides that Lorenzo had emailed him.

Everyone in the office knew that Lorenzo was a workaholic. He also liked to get things done as promptly as possible, so if he was willing to spend two weeks preparing for one meeting- then it obviously was crucial.

Kingsley wouldn't describe himself as a very hard worker, he was more the type to perform averagely. Just enough to cruise by without trouble. But with this presentation, he really wanted to give his best. Mainly because he wanted to impress Lorenzo.

"This graph here, which demographic does it represent?" Kingsley asked as he pointed at his laptop screen.

Lorenzo wore his black, thick rimmed reading glasses as he got up from his chair. Kingsley had always found them super hot, enough for his breath to momentarily hitch. He stood behind Kingsley, before leaning down to look

at the screen. His face was right beside Kingsley's, and if either one of them was to tilt their heads- then they would surely touch.

Kingsley's mind started racing almost instantly. Was this Lorenzo's way of flirting? Showing that he was interested? Kingsley didn't want to misinterpret and make the first move. He didn't want to risk losing his job, so he continued looking at the screen as Lorenzo calmly explained the slide.

Kingsley tried to pay attention, but instead of Lorenzo's words, he could only focus on the depth of his voice. He had a slight accent too, which Kingsley figured could be since Lorenzo did his bachelor's from England.

Both of them were interrupted by Kingsley's phone vibrating. It was right next to his laptop, and the screen lit up with Roan's name and contact picture on the screen.

Roan was Kingsley's best friend, who he often carpooled with to and fro from work. Kingsley cursed internally- he had totally forgotten that Roan was supposed to come back from his vacation on sunday. He was in Italy for his honeymoon, and was starting work again from today. He didn't tell him about working overtime either.

"I have to take this," Kingsley muttered as his picked up the phone.

Lorenzo cleared his throat as he stood up straight, before sitting down on his own chair next to Kingsley, pulling it away just a little bit farther than where it was earlier. An action that was missed by Kinsgley.

"Hey, I'm leaving from work now so I'll pick you up in like ten minutes?" Roan said as Kingsley picked up.

"I'll be working overtime the next two weeks, so I'll just take the subway back home," Kingsley replied.

"Overtime? Two weeks? Why the fuck would you do that?" Roan asked.

"There's an important meeting coming up," Kingsley mumbled.

"Oh, wait- are you with your boss? Is this an attempt to get in his pants?" Roan asked, and Kingsley could just imagine the teasing smirk that the blond would be sporting at that moment.

"Pick me up tomorrow morning at seven thirty, okay?" Kingsley ignored Roan's question, praying that Lorenzo was not close enough to hear what Roan was saying.

"Is he there with you right now? Is that why you're dodging my question?" Roan chuckled as Kingsley stayed quiet. He continued talking after a moment, *"fine, fine. Best of luck. Use protection and name at least one kid after me."*

"I'm hanging up."

"Bye, loverboy."

Kingsley cut the call without saying bye, and kept his phone back on the table.

"Sorry about that. What were you saying regarding the-"

"I think I've explained enough. Whatever you need to know is already in the slides. Please refer to them," Lorenzo cut him off.

Kingsley frowned. Sure, Lorenzo was tough and a perfectionist, but he was a good boss and a natural leader. He always helped out everyone and anyone that needed guidance. So, him technically snapping at Kingsley was very uncharacteristic.

"Right. Got it, *sir* ," Kingsley said. If Lorenzo was going to give him attitude, then Kingsley was going to match it.

Two can play at a game.

Hours passed by as both of them worked, only speaking to each other when it was absolutely necessary. Kingsley knew that Lorenzo wasn't the type to talk much, but being *this* quiet was still unlike him.

Lorenzo barely even looked at Kingsley, not even when they had to speak. Kingsley stole a few glances at the man, wondering what was up. Maybe he was just imagining it, he hadn't really worked with Lorenzo alone before this, so it was possible this was just his personality. Still, something felt off.

"Maybe we should order some dinner," Kingsley suggested. It was getting late and he was starting to feel hungry.

"You can head home," Lorenzo replied.

"But there's still some work left," Kingsley said.

"I'll finish it myself, don't worry about it," Lorenzo dismissed him.

"I can-"

"Go home, Mr. Kingsley."

Kingsley was taken aback once again. Lorenzo usually called everyone with their first names, in an attempt to not be extremely formal all the time. Kingsley didn't remember the last time Lorenzo referred to him as anything other than Reece.

"Alright, goodnight Mr. Salazar," Kingsley said as he got up from his chair and started packing his things.

The next day, Lorenzo's attitude towards him was still as cold. He wasn't being mean or rude, just distant and dismissive. Which pissed off Kingsley even more. Kingsley believed that he had a good instinct when it came to people, so he knew that something was definitely wrong.

He couldn't figure out what, though. It couldn't have been what happened at the club on friday night, because Lorenzo was fine initially on monday. But there was an abrupt change in his attitude, and Kingsley really wanted to know what caused it.

Kingsley ran into Lorenzo in the break room when he went there to grab some coffee. Lorenzo glanced at him, to see who had entered, and immediately looked away when he saw that it was Kingsley. Kingsley tried

to make small talk, but it was pointless yet again, and was met by a disinterested response by Lorenzo, before the boss walked out the room.

"I heard that your meeting with SoulTech went well. That's a huge deal—"

"Thank you, if you'll excuse me then I have to get back to work now," Lorenzo stated without as much as giving Kingsley a second look. The Italian man stood dumbfounded at his spot, clueless as to what he had even done to deserve such contempt.

Any doubts that Kingsley had about possibly overthinking about the situation were cleared the third day when he went for lunch with Nina, Miles and Anwar. Lorenzo joined them too, after Nina told him about the authentic Mexican restaurant they were going to.

Lorenzo was sitting directly in front of Kingsley, yet he never looked his way, even when the latter was talking. Nobody else seemed to notice, but for Kingsley it became clear that Lorenzo was acting this way intentionally. especially considering he was not treating others with the same coldness.

At some point during the lunch, Kingsley was subconsciously glaring holes at the other man's head. He didn't even realise he was doing so, until Anwar bumped his elbow. Kingsley tilted his head to look at him, and Anwar just raised his furrowed eyebrows, as if silently asking him what was up.

"Nah, it's nothing," Kingsley said as he picked up his glass of coke.

"Right," Anwar didn't look convinced, but surprisingly, he didn't push it, "there's this new jazz club opening. Wanna head there this weekend?"

"I'm hanging out with Ro, he's back from Italy," Kingsley answered.

"Ah shit, I don't wanna third wheel with these two," Anwar whispered as he slyly motioned towards Nina and Miles, "the *would they, won't they* is killing me."

"You and just about everyone in the office," Kingsley muttered.

As if feeling eyes on him, Kingsley looked up in front of him. Lorenzo was staring at him, with a flat look devoid of any emotions. Kingsley met his stare, but he couldn't help but frown slightly.

First, Lorenzo doesn't even want to breathe in the same room as him. And then he wants to stare right into his eyes as if he's gazing into his soul? Kingsley had just about enough of his bullshit, the tension was starting to suffocate him.

Kingsley wasn't the type to beat around the bush, and he wasn't one to not say anything when getting treated like shit. He was going to confront Lorenzo.

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chapter six of king's guard is up on patreon! the link is in my bio if u want to read quicker updates!

also, nobody asked buuut I imagine Kingsley as Lorenzo Zurzolo

Chapter Four

Kingsley couldn't focus.

He glanced up from his laptop, to look at Lorenzo who was sitting directly opposite to him on the conference table. He looked absolutely determined, with his reading glasses on, and a stoic expression on his face.

It was now Friday, and they had been working together for over an hour now. When they got to the room, Kingsley asked him what was on the agenda for the day, and Lorenzo simply told him that he had already emailed Kingsley what to do. That was the only bit of conversation they had, and after five days of this, Kingsley finally had enough.

"Okay, you know what? I've let this slide for days now, but I can't anymore. Why have you been treating me like you cannot be in the same room as me?" Kingsley spoke up.

"Excuse me?" Lorenzo seemed taken aback, as he looked up from his screen to Kingsley. His eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

"You know what I'm talking about," Kingsley said, "you've been cold and dismissive since monday. And it clearly has to do with me because you're fine with the others!"

"Mr. Kingsley, I apologise if that's how I've made you feel, but I can assure you that—"

"This is exactly what I mean," Kingsley sighed, "I know you're my boss, but you've always called me Reece. And I know this is our first time working alone together but I've seen you work with others. This is not how you act around them. So tell me, what did I do?"

"You've done nothing, I've just been focused on the work so I'm sorry if I don't have the time and energy to chit chat with you. I'm your boss, not your friend," Lorenzo snapped.

Kingsley was taken aback at this, he had never in his history of working at Lorenzo's company, seen him lose his temper even in the slightest. But Kingsley was not the type to back down or be intimidated, even by his own boss.

"You know, I really respected you until now," Kingsley retorted, "because I thought you were an honest man. But now I see that's just a facade since you cannot be straight with me and tell me what the fucking problem is."

"You want to know the fucking problem?" Lorenzo let out a dry laugh, as he took off his glasses and kept them on the table, "I have a problem with lying, cheating scumbags."

"What?" Kingsley had no clue what Lorenzo meant.

"You heard me."

"I did but... What does that have to do with me? How the fuck am I a lying, cheating scumbag?"

"Friday night? You with that guy? Ring any bells?" Lorenzo rose a brow, and Kingsley just blinked at him in confusion.

"Yeah, I fucked him. I did it outside work and I didn't cheat on anyone. What are you even on about?" Kingsley questioned.

"Didn't cheat on anyone? What about you boyfriend?"

"My what? I don't have a boyfriend," Kingsley replied, and Lorenzo's face visibly paled at his statement.

"What about... What about that blond guy that drops you off at work? Who called you on Monday?" Lorenzo asked, now looking equally as confused as Kingsley.

"That's my best friend," Kingsley deadpanned, "my very happily married best friend that just returned from his honeymoon."

"Oh."

"Yeah. Oh."

"Okay. Fuck," Lorenzo sighed, as he massaged his temples with his thumb and middle finger, "I cannot even begin to— I apologise. I assumed things, and... And well, even if you were cheating on anyone, it's none of my business. It's your personal life and you're free to do whatever—"

"Can I just—"

"—and I never should've let my personal feelings affect our work. That is extremely unprofessional on my part and I cannot even believe how many boundaries I crossed. Reece, I hope you—"

"Why did you then?" Kingsley interrupted him.

"Why did I what?" Lorenzo slightly tilted his head to the side.

"You've always been extremely professional, like, way too formal actually. Why did you let your personal feelings affect your work?"

Kingsley kind of wanted to laugh at that moment. He couldn't believe the week of tension between the two was because Lorenzo assumed he had a boyfriend and was being unfaithful. He wasn't pissed, just amused. And also very, *very* curious as to why Lorenzo was effected *so* much by his alleged adultery.

"I should not be telling you this at work, and especially as your boss, but clearly we've crossed that point," Lorenzo sighed again, "I sadly have a history with unfaithful partners. Multiple ones. So, it's a bit of a sensitive topic for me. I really hope you're able to forgive me for my behavior this week. I assure you that it'll never happen again."

"Forgiven and forgotten."

Kingsley was just a little sad. He was hoping that the reason would have to do more with Lorenzo wanting to fuck Kingsley just as much as the latter wanted to, and not a sad story about getting cheated on. Nonetheless, he

was glad that the problem was out in the open and resolved. They could now go back to working properly.

"Thank you. I really appreciate that," Lorenzo said with a nod.

"Now, can you forward me the data we gathered for the survey about—"

Kingsley got more work done in the next few hours than he had in the entire past week. Turns out, when Lorenzo was actually communicating with him — they made a pretty good team. The presentation was starting to come together. And he was sure that in a week they would be completely prepared.

Lorenzo also ordered dinner, the two took a small break as they ate Chinese and talked. Actually talked. About things other than surveys and reports and PowerPoint slides.

"I think this just might be the best kung pao chicken that I've had," Kingsley stated.

"See? I told you this place is amazing," Lorenzo chuckled, "I order from them atleast twice a week."

"Really? I expected you to eat more healthy. Like salads for all the meals with protein shakes on the side," Kingsley said.

"I do like to cook healthy but unfortunately I don't get as much time to do that anymore, so all my dinners are sadly take-outs now," Lorenzo replied.

"I can't cook for shit," Kingsley admitted, "I had this phase where I binge watched like six seasons of MasterChef and thought that cooking was my calling. Fifty minutes in the kitchen and everyone was glad that the house wasn't on fire from all the things that I burned."

"You never gave it a try again?" Lorenzo asked.

"My friend Roan likes to cook so I give him a hand once in a while, but it's mostly just prep work and not actual cooking," Kingsley answered, "I tried

making pasta once when I had some people over and completely messed it up. Roan said I was a disgrace to all the Italians."

"I didn't know you were Italian."

"My dad is," Kingsley said.

"You know," Lorenzo paused for a moment, looking slightly unsure, before continuing, "I know this really good Italian restaurant. I still feel bad about my behavior towards you this week, and I really want to make it up to you. Will you let me take you out for an apology dinner tomorrow?"

"I'm not going to say no to free food."

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"The salmon shirt or this one?" Kingsley asked, raising two shirts, one in each hand for the men in front of him to choose from.

"Aren't they literally the same color?" Roan looked confused.

"No, are you blind?" Kingsley looked almost offended at Roan's ignorance.

"I really don't see a difference," Roan said, before glancing at his husband, Kai, "do you?"

"Huh?" Kai looked up from his phone, "oh, go with the salmon one. It matches the shade of your coat more."

"His coat is literally black..."

"Remind me why I ever asked you for fashion advice?" Kingsley sighed as he looked at the blond man.

"You've never asked either of us for fashion advice actually," Kai said with a smirk, "but I suppose you wanna look extra hot for your date tonight."

"It's not a date," Kingsley said as he looked at both the shirts, "you know what? Kai, you were right. Salmon is better. He's just taking me out as an
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apology."

"I still can't believe he thought you were dating Roan," Kai said with a laugh.

"Not only dating me but cheating on me. Like come on, as if anyone would cheat on—" Roan pointed at his own body, "—this."

"Let me just give a call to my side hoes," Kai joked. Roan narrowed his eyes at his husband, who just blew him a kiss in response.

"You both are absolutely disgusting. And I'm getting late," Kingsley said, "can you please leave so that I can change?"

Kingsley was hanging out with the two the whole day, and now he was about to leave for his dinner with Lorenzo at a fancy Italian restaurant that Kingsley was quite familiar with.

"Why does he boss us around in our own home?" Kai muttered as the husbands exited the room.

"I heard that!"

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Chapter Five

Kingsley fixed his collar as he stood in front of the restaurant. He was a little surprised when Lorenzo told him where they would be going. It was a fancy place, and one usually had to wait weeks if not months to be able to book a reservation there.

Kingsley knew that very well. His dad owned a chain of hotels and restaurants all over the world, and the building he was standing in was one of them.

Kingsley finally walked inside, and the attendant immediately lit up when she saw the man she was quite familiar with. She didn't know exactly who Kingsley was, but just that he was a very important guest.

"Mr. Kinsgley! I wasn't aware you were coming tonight," she said as she looked down at the list of reservations, "but I'm sure I can get a table for you! Give me just a—"

"The reservation should actually be under the name Lorenzo Salazar tonight," Kingsley said.

"Oh, yes! Mr. Salazar is waiting for his guest, I'll walk you there myself," the attendant said. Kingsley thanked her, and followed her as she led them to where Lorenzo was, "if you would like me to upgrade you to a private room, then I can do that as well."

"That won't be unnecessary, but thank you," Kingsley replied with a polite smile. His eyes fell at the back of Lorenzo's head, as he continued, "also, Hilary? Could you do me a favor?"

"Anything, Mr. Kingsley."

"Could you send a server that doesn't know me?" He asked, Hilary gave him a confused look, but immediately nodded nontheless.

"Of course."

"Thank you."

Once Kingsley reassured her that there was nothing else she could help him with, she walked away back to her post. Kingsley made his way towards Lorenzo, who gave his employee a polite smile as he noticed his arrival.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, I still tend to forget how bad the city traffic is," Kingsley said as he sat down.

"You're still a couple minutes early, actually," Lorenzo said as he looked down at his watch, "besides, I got here barely a minute before you. No need to apologise."

"So, we're settled on the fact that nobody is going to apologise to anyone today? Good," Kingsley said as he opened the menu. Lorenzo chuckled, before doing the same.

They placed their orders shortly after that. The server came first with their drinks, and there was a slight awkwardness between the two men till then. It was their first time hanging out alone outside work. Kingsley could tell that Lorenzo was still embarassed about his behavior the whole weak, and he didn't know how to help him get past it.

The two made small talk. They talked about what their weekend plans were, Lorenzo asked if Kingsley watched the football game, to which Kingsley replied saying he wasn't a sports fan. With each new topic, it was getting harder and harder to find a middle ground or common interest to talk about.

"If you don't mind me asking... Why is this presentation so important?" Kingsley decided that talking about work was probably the best idea.

"Well, it's to raise funds for the company, so of course it's really important," Lorenzo answered.

Kingsley noticed that his boss had immediately gone stiff, as he answered while looking away and then taking a sip of his scotch. As if he wanted to

avoid the topic. And it was very unlike Lorenzo to not want to talk about work.

"You know what I mean," Kingsley continued, "I've never seen you quite so worked up over one meeting."

"It's noticable?" Lorenzo asked, looking back at the other man, a frown appearing on his face as Kingsley nodded.

Lorenzo was usually always calm and collected at work, but it was becoming clear with every passing day that he was really stressing about their upcoming presentation. Kingsley could tell that something was up.

"I don't think anyone else has noticed, if you're worried about that. But we've been working together a lot so it kinda shows, yeah," Kingsley answered.

"I don't really want to disclose this to any of my employees, but since you're working with me, I suppose you should know how important the meeting is," Lorenzo paused, gulping down his drink in a single go before continuing, "please know that this is extremely confidential information and —"

"I'm not going to announce it in the break room, you can trust me," Kinsgley stated.

Lorenzo looked at Kingsley, his eyes staring the younger man down as he visibly debating whether to tell Kingsley or not. After a few moments, he finally sighed and decided to trust Kingsley as he spoke up.

"We require another round of funding, it's as simple as that," Lorenzo continued before Kingsley could protest, "the board has found an investor. The only issue is that this investor wants to bring his own CEO—"

"Wait, they want to kick you out of your own company?" Kingsley asked, looking offended.

"They want me to step down as the CEO. I'd still be the founder and work at the office, but... Just at a different post."

"Why? You're doing such a good job, so why?" Kingsley questioned.

"The investors claim if they're going to risk their money on us, then they want surety that the company succeeds. They believe having their own guy as the CEO, some old man with years of experience would guarantee that rather than someone like me," Lorenzo shrugged.

"Someone like you?" Kingsley rose a brow, "someone self made that started this company from scratch without a penny from anyone else? Someone that's hardworking and fair and dedicated to what he does and compassionate in how he treats his employees?"

"Wow," Lorenzo said with a chuckle, "you seem more pissed off at this than me."

"Obviously?" Kingsley deadpanned, "who the fuck do these people think they are? They've obviously lost their mind if they think they can replace you so easily?"

"Well, the truth is that they can," Lorenzo stated, "I talked it out with the board and they gave me six weeks to find another investor. Otherwise... Well, I'll have no other choice. We need the funding to keep going."

"If that's the case then we're not going down without a fight. We're going to rock the shit out of the meeting next week," Kingsley replied.

His determination brought a subconscious smile to Lorenzo's face. Lorenzo was about to reply, when he was interrupted by the server bringing them their dinner.

For some reason, despite their previous topic of conversation being quite serious— it lightened up the mood later. Lorenzo seemed to open up more, and the rest of the night passed by effortlessly. Lorenzo insisted on paying, Kingsley protested, but the former shut him down saying this was his way

of apologising, and he was the boss so his word was the final word. The last part was a joke, of course.

"I'm going to call for a cab," Kingsley said as the two walked out of the restaurant.

"I can drop you home," Lorenzo replied almost instantly.

"No!" Kingsley denied suspiciously fast. He didn't want Lorenzo knowing where he lived. "It's okay, really, I don't want you going out of your way."

"I insist. The cab prices are going to be insane this time of the night, and I don't pay you that good," Lorenzo tried to joke, but Kingsley could only reply with a dry laugh.

"I'll take a cab, it's cool, seriously," Kingsley reiterated.

Lorenzo tilted his head slightly, looking a bit confused, but he nodded nonetheless, not wanting to push the other man's boundaries. Which Kingsley appreciated.

"If you say so," Lorenzo raised his hand forward for Kingsley to shake, "I had a good time tonight."

"So did I," Kingsley replied as he shook his boss's hand.

Kingsley was aware that handshakes were supposed to last for barely a few seconds, and that you weren't supposed to stare into the eyes of the other person with such intensity. Both the men were holding onto each other's hand, longer than necessary, as their gazes stayed fixed on one another.

Kingsley subconsciously licked his lower lip, and he could swear that he saw Lorenzo's eyes fall down at his mouth right before they were interrupted by the valet.

"Mr. Salazar? Here's your car," he said.

"Right, uh," Lorenzo took a step back as he cleared his throat, "goodnight, Reece."

"Goodnight, sir."

Once again, Kingsley could bet that he saw a change in Lorenzo's expression. Just a subtle one. Or maybe it was just his imagination that thought Lorenzo clenched his jaw, as if holding himself back from something, as he finally tore his eyes away from his employee and walked over to his car.

Kingsley watched as the other man drove away, after giving him one last look. How was it so that their dinner had gone so smoothly, yet there was an enormous amount of tension in just the last couple of minutes? Was Kingsley just imagining it? He was aware that he wanted Lorenzo, so was he reading into things?

Or maybe, just maybe, could there be a small possibility that Lorenzo wanted him too?

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chapter nine of king's guard is up on Patreon ! link in bio <3

Chapter Six

"I think the meeting went quite well, they—"

"They're not going to invest," Lorenzo interrupted.

The two men just got done with their meeting that they had spent a long time preparing for. Whereas Kingsley thought the presentation went well, Lorenzo clearly didn't seem to believe so. They were walking out of the building, towards their own office which was just a few blocks away.

"What? Why do you think that?" Kingsley asked.

"They didn't ask us any questions in the end," Lorenzo stated like it was the most obvious thing in the world. Kingsley furrowed his brows, looking confused. "If they were interested in our company then they would've had a million questions. But they weren't, so they didn't even bother with any queries."

"Oh." Kingsley finally understood, "well, maybe they—"

"I don't want to waste my time on hopeless optimism. I'd much rather spend that energy on finding alternatives," Lorenzo said.

"Right," Kingsley replied with a firm nod, "we still have four weeks. I'm going to make a list of potential investors by today."

"We?" Lorenzo asked, and Kingsley nodded again, "you don't have to work overtime for this anymore. It's my title on the line, nobody else's jobs will change."

"Yeah well, I don't want to call some old fart my boss. So I'm doing this for me, not you," Kingsley replied.

Lorenzo chuckled as he glanced to his side, towards Kingsley who was looking ahead as they walked. Kingsley noticed eyes on him, and turned to

face Lorenzo. The younger man winked at his boss, a cheeky smile on his face, before turning his head to face ahead again.

Kingsley was telling Lorenzo about his best friend, Roan, who also worked at an investment firm. He didn't want to raise Lorenzo's hopes, but the least Roan could help them up with was set a meeting with his superiors, or tell them about other firms that were currently looking to invest in tech.

Kingsley didn't tell Lorenzo, but he had already spoken to Roan and prepared a list of firms. He wanted to prepare for the worst ever since Lorenzo told him he might have to step down as the CEO. He just needed his approval to send out emails and schedule meetings.

Kingsley couldn't remember the last time he was this passionate about something. He really didn't want Lorenzo to lose his post. He just couldn't let that happen.

The two finally parted ways once they reached their floor. Lorenzo went to his office, whereas Kingsley went to the break room to grab some much needed coffee.

"Hey man, how'd the meeting go?" Miles asked as he entered the room behind Kingsley.

"Fine, I guess, time will tell," Kingsley answered vaguely.

"Fair," Miles awkwardly cleared his throat as he stood next to the dark-haired man.

He seemed nervous, and Kingsley sighed as he turned to face him. The redhead wasn't even meeting his eyes, and it was very amusing how he was the exact opposite of Nina. Nina was fiery, confident and outspoken, and Miles was as shy as they came. But somehow, the two still managed to make a good pair.

"What is it?" Kingsley asked. It was clear that Miles wanted to talk about something.

"Uh, so there's this guy—"

"Are you coming out to me?"

"What? No," Miles turned red as his eyes widened, "I meant that I have this guy friend who's gay, and I think you both would—"

"Nope," Kingsley interrupted Miles again.

"But you didn't even—"

"I don't do dates, and I especially don't require anyone setting me up. So no." Kingsley stated.

"Come on, his name is Jake and he's a good guy," Miles frowned.

"What's in it for you?" Kingsley narrowed his eyes slightly. It was very unlike Miles to push for something, that was more of an Anwar thing to do.

"Uh," Miles rubbed the back of his neck as he spoke, "I was thinking we could do like a double date?"

"So, you're too scared to ask Nina out and are using me and your friend to be what? Your wingmen?" Kingsley rose a brow.

"Kinda..." Miles admitted.

"I really don't do dates, Miles," Kingsley said. Miles' face fell, a frown on his face as he nodded understandingly. Kingsley sighed, he wasn't a soft hearted person by any means, but just about anybody would've taken pity at the other man at that moment. "So, just one date, okay? And you gotta get me coffee for a week."

"Deal!" Miles grinned, "thanks, man. I owe you one."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever." Kingsley waved him off, "just tell me when and where."

"This friday after work?" Miles asked hopefully.

"Sure."

"What's friday after work?" Anwar asked as he walked in.

"I'm taking Miles to a gay strip club," Kingsley replied.

"No, he's—" a flustered Miles was cut off by Anwar laughing.

"Can I come with—"

"Ah shit, I forgot to send Mr. Salazar the, uh, the report," Kingsley said as he turned towards the exit.

"What report?" Anwar asked.

"It's confidential," Kingsley answered as he rushed out of the break room. It wasn't his place to invite Anwar, it was Miles' burden to bear.

Once back at his cabin, Kingsley went straight to work. He sent out emails to any and all potential investors. Four weeks was a very short amount of time to be able to close a million dollar deal, but Kingsley was going to try his hardest to help Lorenzo save his job.

By the end of the day, Kingsley had heard back from a few people. Unfortunately, almost all of them could only schedule a meeting in a minimum of two weeks. There was only one investor that was ready to have a meeting on thursday. The little bit of good news brought a smile to Kingsley's face as the clock was about to hit five.

Kingsley knocked on Lorenzo's door before opening it. Lorenzo looked up, motioning for Kingsley to be quiet and get in, as he was on a phone call. Kingsley closed the door as silently as he could, before walking in and sitting on the chair in front of Lorenzo.

Lorenzo had once again removed his suit jacket, and folded the sleeves of his white shirt up till his elbows. Kingsley had gotten quite used to this sight, but it still never failed to make his stomach churn. Kingsley eyes were fixated on Lorenzo's arms, unholy thoughts plaguing his mind as he imagined those hands around his throat.

Fuck, Kingsley thought to himself. It was the worst possible time to get a boner, but thankfully he was sitting down and with the table between them — Lorenzo wouldn't be able to see it. Kingsley subtly tried to readjust the crotch area of his pants. He wasn't even at half mast, but rock hard.

Kingsley was distracted from his own thoughts by the sound of Lorenzo laughing. His eyes went up to look at his boss's face, who had a wide grin as he talked to whoever was on the other side.

How the fuck is his smile so sexy? Kingsley never knew he could be turned on by someone's *smile* of all things.

—alright, it was a pleasure to talk to you as well, Mr. Denver, I'll see you at your daughter's wedding. Bye."

Lorenzo kept the phone, his smile almost robotically falling from his face as he tiredly rubbed his face with his hand.

"Everything okay?" Kingsley asked.

"Yeah, I just need to get used to the fake pleasantries," Lorenzo answered.

"They get easier with time," Kingsley replied. Lorenzo finally looked at him, raising a brow in question, "my grandmother was somewhat of a socialite. She used to drag me to events with her a lot as a kid."

"Interesting," Lorenzo hummed, his expression was full of visible curiousity as he spoke, "what about your parents?"

"What about them?" Kingsley shrugged, a blank look on his face. He spoke up again, before Lorenzo could question him further, "did you read the email I forwarded you?"

"No, sorry, I've just been swamped with work and calls," Lorenzo sighed as he moved his chair slightly to the side to look at his computer, "you got us a meeting?"

"Yeah. This thursday," Kingsley replied with a smile.

"That's great!" Lorenzo exclaimed as he got up from his chair and walked around the table towards his employee.

Kingsley's eyes widened slightly as he threw his hands onto his lap, trying to hide his erection that hadn't gone down completely. Lorenzo patted Kingsley's shoulder as he rested against the table, looking down at the dark-haired man.

"Good work. And really fast too," Lorenzo complimented.

"Just, you know, earning the paycheck," Kingsley said with an awkward, dry chuckle.

"Well, thank you," Lorenzo stated before looking at his watch, "also it's five, you can head home."

"Yep," Kingsley said with a nod.

Lorenzo furrowed his brows in confusion as Kingsley remained seated. He knew it was cue for him to get up and leave, but there was no way that Lorenzo wouldn't notice his little (or not so little) problem if he stood up.

"Is there anything else?" Lorenzo asked.

"Nope," Kingsley replied. He inhaled deeply as he rolled his chair around, so that his back was towards Lorenzo. He quickly got up, not facing his boss for even a second as he scurried out of the office, leaving a very puzzled Lorenzo behind.

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p.s. I don't have any tiers on my patreon, so u can pledge ANY amount that u want <3

Chapter Seven

Kingsley used to be in love.

He was with his highschool boyfriend, Cole, for over two years. But once Kingsley moved away for college, and Cole stayed behind— they broke up shortly after. Cole said the reason was long distance, and Kingsley was even ready to move back to his hometown, but Roan had stopped him from dropping out and doing so.

Kingsley took the break-up hard. Even though four years had passed, he still wasn't completely over his first love. What made things worse was that a few months ago, he found out that Cole had started dating Derek, who was Kingsley's best friend back in school. Not only that, they had started dating just months after his break-up with Kingsley.

"Engaged!? They're fucking engaged?" Kingsley exclaimed as he ran a hand through his hair.

He had just come across a post on Instagram, where Cole's cousin had congratulated the couple on their engagement. Needless to say, Kingsley was livid.

"Seems like that," Roan muttered as he watched Kingsley pace around the living room.

"I can't believe this shit," Kingsley said, "so, Derek didn't only date my fucking ex boyfriend, but now he's *marrying* him? Isn't that like, against the bro code or something?"

"You both aren't exactly friends anymore..."

"This is the reason why! He could've had his gay awakening with anyone! Anyone but Cole!" Kingsley inhaled deeply, trying to calm down, but it was of no use.

"It's been years, Kingsley, you've got to move on," Kai, Kingsley's other friend and Roan's husband, said softly.

"You think I haven't tried?" Kingsley snapped, "it's not that easy to move on from your first fucking love."

"Hey, you're angry, I get that, but don't take it out on Kai," Roan said.

"Sorry," Kingsley muttered. He sat down on the recliner and groaned, "do you know if they've set a date yet?"

"No," Roan answered, "even if I did, it's not your business anymore. The less you know, the better."

"Don't go all philosophical on me," Kingsley deadpanned, "Cole used to talk all the time about wanting to marry me and growing old with me and all the bullshit. All lies. All fucking lies."

"Things change, people break up," Kai said, "you're going to find someone too."

"I highly doubt that," Kingsley scoffed.

Kingsley hadn't dated anyone since Cole. Just a few first dates and one night stands here and there, but nothing serious. In his eyes, nothing compared to what he had with Cole. Besides, he wasn't ready to get his heart broken again. There was no way he would let *anyone* have that kind of power over him again. Not even in his worst nightmare.

"Let's go out," Roan said as he got up.

"Where?" Kingsley asked.

"Anywhere. How about that club on the thirty second you keep raving about?" Roan replied.

"I'm not in the mood," Kingsley muttered.

"Well, then get in the mood, because we're all getting sloshed tonight," Roan stated.

"We have work in the morning?"

"So?" Kai said as he stood up as well, "not the first time we'll be going to work with a hangover."

"Fuck this. I need a drink, I'm in," Kingsley said.

"Atta boy," Roan smirked.

Kai called for a cab, and soon enough the three men were on their way to the club. Kingsley had only one agenda for the night, and that was to get shitfaced drunk and forget that his ex best friend was marrying his ex boyfriend.

As soon as they reached, Kingsley called for shots. He pulled out his platinum card, slamming it on the table and stating that the drinks were on him tonight. Alcohol probably wasn't the best solution for his problems in the long term, but in that moment, it was all he needed.

"Should I call him?" Kingsley asked, "I should call him, right?"

It wasn't even an hour, and he was already drunk. Kai was pretty drunk too, and despite claiming that they were *all* going to get shitfaced, Roan paced his alcohol. He knew he'd be taking care of not one, but two drunk idiots by the end of the night. And as it turned out, he was right.

"No," Roan said sternly, "we're not calling any exes tonight. That's a big fat no."

"But come on," Kingsley whined, "I just want him to know that he broke heart. Shattered it into tiny little pieces! He needs to know how much he hurt me!"

"I'm sure he already does. If you want to get back at him then do so by pretending like you don't care. Like you're above all this," Roan stated.

"That's no fun," Kingsley sighed.

"You can have fun here. Anyone you find cute?" Roan asked.

"Nah, I don't want to hook up with a stranger," Kingsley shook his head before taking another shot, "now if that stranger was 6'3 with dark hair and a jawline so sharp that it could cut me... And a body built like a Greek god and a voice so... So..."

"Are we talking about a particular someone here?" Kai teased.

"I think I know who we're talking about," Roan said with a smirk, "someone that is perhaps also your boss?"

"Ooh, sexy daddy Salazar," Kai said, making Roan narrow his eyes at his husband. Kai raised his arms in defence, "I've seen his pictures in articles, okay? That *may* have led to me stalking him online. You can't deny that he's sexy."

"So very sexy," Kingsley agreed, "he makes me to do things I never thought I would do willingly."

"Like what? Work overtime?" Roan asked.

"Exactly!" Kingsley exclaimed. "Can you imagine me *actually* caring about work? About some stupid nine to five job? Nope. Never thought I'd see the day."

"Truly a miracle," Roan replied with a nod.

"Do you even know if he's into men?" Kai asked.

"Won't be the first straight man I've seduced, won't be the last," Kingsley said with a casual shrug.

"You're a menace," Roan muttered.

"Hey, your husband was straight before you hooked your claws in him too," Kingsley retorted.

"Fair enough," Roan grumbled, before taking a sip of his beer.

"I need to use the restroom," Kingsley said as he got up, almost stumbling as he did so.

"Need help?" Roan asked.

"I'm a grown man, I can go to the loo on my own," Kingsley said with a roll of his eyes.

Once Kingsley was done with his business and had washed his hands, he stayed in the restroom. He pulled out his phone from his pocket, and stared at his contact list. He wasn't in the right mind, and he knew he was about to do something he'd surely regret in the morning. But at that moment, he didn't care.

He dialled the number and pressed his phone against his ear. There was no answer from the other end, and it went to voicemail. A part of Kingsley knew it wasn't too late and he should've just cut the call, but that part was very strongly overpowered by his drunk and daring state of mind.

"Hey," Kinsgley continued, "I know I shouldn't be calling you like this but... I was just thinking about you, and God I can't stop thinking about you. Even after all this time. Trust me, I've tried. So fucking hard, but you're always on my mind. You don't know what you do to me..."

Kingsley slurred his words, and the time limit was over. He mindlessly tapped on his screen to confirm and send the voicemail, before keeping his phone back in his pocket and heading out to the bar where his friends were waiting for him.

"Took you long enough," Kai said.

"I have a big bladder," Kingsley replied.

"Gross," Kai wrinkled his nose as he spoke.

"Kai," Kingsley deadpanned, "I've seen you eat from the fucking floor. You don't get to call me gross."

"Hey! Five second rule, okay?"

"Whatever you say, Nahar," Kingsley muttered.

The three stayed in the club till around one, drinking away Kingsley's sorrows. Once Kingsley started getting loud and Roan feared they might get kicked out of the building, he called for a cab. He helped the two drunk men to his apartment. Kai was in a better state than Kingsley, so Roan helped the latter to the guest bedroom first.

"I'll drive you to your apartment before work tomorrow so that you can change into some fresh clothes, okay?" Roan said as he pulled the blanket up, making sure his best friend was covered.

"Mhm," Kingsley muttered.

"Cool. I'll wake you up at seven," Roan said as he got up to leave the room.

"Will you make me breakfast in bed, too?" Kingsley asked.

"How about I punch you in the nuts instead?" Roan retorted.

"So sweet. Bestest friend ever," Kingsley muttered.

"God, why am I always the mom friend..." Roan muttered as he switched off the lights and left the room, leaving Kingsley to fall asleep and dream about one particular man.

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chapter 13 up on patreon! link in bio!

Chapter Eight

"Fuck. I'm an idiot. I'm officially the most idiotic idiot to have ever existed in this history of idiots," Kingsley muttered to himself.

Kingsley had the worst hangover that he'd ever had in years. He once again blamed his fleeting youth for it, even though he was still only twenty three. Roan woke him up in the morning with a mug of coffee, which Kingsley was very grateful for. He then drove the two to Kingsley's, and waited till the man showered and got ready for work. This meant that Roan had to wake up extra early, but he was a good friend.

It was when Kingsley was in the elevator of his office building, that he realised what he had done the previous night. Apart from drinking so much that he risked alcohol poisoning, that is.

Kingsley called *him.* And when he didn't pick up, he sent a voicemail.

The worst part was that Kingsley remembered exactly what he had said. He remembered each and every word, and now he couldn't help but cringe internally. He hoped the elevator would fall and the earth would crack open and swallow him whole, but that didn't happen as he reached his floor.

Kingsley dropped his bag on his desk, before walking to the breakroom to get another coffee. If there was anything that was going to help him survive the day, it was caffeine. Kingsley was pouring himself a cup, when Lorenzo entered the room, making Kingsley freeze for a moment.

He took a deep breath in, he had a gameplan in his head. And that was deny, deny, deny.

"Morning, Reece," Lorenzo greeted as he stood next to Kingsley, grabbing his *best boss eve* r coffee mug that was a Christmas present from Anwar.

"Morning, Mr. Salazar," Kingsley said, making sure his voice didn't give him away.

"So, last night..."

"What about it?" Kingsley was going to play dumb.

"I got a call from you. I was working so I missed it," Lorenzo recalled.

"Oh? I was out. Must've been a misdial," Kingsley said.

"Is that so?" Lorenzo raised a questioning brow. Kingsley turned to face his boss, his expression stoic as he casually shrugged in response, "so there was no particular reason why you wanted to call me at midnight?"

"Of course not, you're my boss, calling you at midnight seems like pushing professional boundaries," Kingsley replied.

"Right," Lorenzo nodded, "must've been a misdial then."

"Yep. A buttdial." *Or a booty call.*

"Makes sense," Lorenzo said, "I know it's Friday night but do you mind working overtime today? I got us a meeting with an investor first thing Monday."

"Of course," Kingsley replied, "I'll get back to work now."

Kingsley turned around and walked out the breakroom, exhaling a deep breath that he wasn't even aware he was holding in. He had called Lorenzo last night, and basically told him how much he wanted him.

But Lorenzo hadn't mentioned the vociemail at all. And he seemed, well, pretty normal in their interaction. Kingsley was *very* drunk last night, so he wondered if instead of sending the voicemail, he deleted it instead. That was a very plausible explanation, since he remembered tapping on the screen and not really paying attention to what he was doing.

Kingsley breathed in relief, his sloppiness may have just saved him from a very embarassing incident.

Kingsley wasn't in the state to do anything productive, and somehow got through the next few hours at work, till it was time for lunch. He mentally noted to thank Roan for yesterday and this morning, and also for packing him some food.

He was in the breakroom once again, having lunch with his co-workers. Miles was sitting next to him, and he pulled his chair closer.

"So, we still on for tonight?" Miles asked, quietly so that nobody else could listen to what they were talking about.

"What's tonight?" Kingsley questioned back, and then it hit him that he had promised something to Miles, "oh, the double date."

"Yeah," Miles frowned, "you're gonna be there, right?"

"Lorenzo asked me to work overtime," Kingsley paused, "but I'm sure I can manage to leave by dinner time. Where are we going?"

"To that new club on the thirty second," Miles answered.

Kingsley groaned as he leaned back on his chair. He was *not* ready for another night of drinking. Not unless he wanted his liver and his body to give up on him.

"Okay. I'll meet you guys there directly," Kingsley said.

"I can come pick you up or—"

"No, no, that's fine. I'll probably come straight from the office or something," Kingsley shook his head.

"Cool, whatever suits you," Miles paused, "thanks again for doing this, man."

"I still think you should stop beating around the bush and tell Nina you're madly in love with her," Kingsley muttered.

"I— I'm not..." Miles stuttered. His red face gave away his inability to lie. He didn't say anything after that, and neither did Kingsley.

Kingsley was swamped with work for the rest of the day. Thankfully his headache was pretty much gone, but he was still more exhausted than usual. He didn't even notice as the clock struck five, and his co-workers started to pack up and leave for the day. Miles reminded him once again about their plans, and the dark haired man simply nodded in response.

Lorenzo came out of his office once everyone had left, and the two of them moved to the conference room to start working. They were mainly making changes in their old presentation for it to better suit the investor they were going to pitch to on Monday. It wasn't very hard work, just time consuming.

"Did you go through the profit reports of last quarter? I'm sure they're going to have questions about that," Lorenzo said.

"Yeah, it's all done."

"Great! I'm really sorry for making you work on a Friday night, I'm sure you had plans," Lorenzo said as the two finished up their work.

"Nah, no plans for—" Kingsley's eyes widened as he remembered his double date with Miles. He looked at his watch, and sure enough, he was running *very* late, "oh, shit."

"Is everything okay?" Lorenzo asked.

"Yeah, yeah," Kingsley answered as he hurriedly packed his laptop and other belongings in his bag. He was about to say bye, when his phone rang. He looked at the screen, and it was Miles.

"Where are you? I've been dropping you texts for like an hour now," Miles said as soon as Kingsley picked up.

"I'm so sorry, I was working and I didn't see the time. I'll be there in like, uh, fifteen," Kingsley said.

"There's no need," Miles muttered, *"Nina's roommate has food poisoning so she's taking care of her and had to cancel. Jake just found some other guy to flirt at the club. I'm about to head home too."*

"Oh," Kingsley frowned, "that sucks, man."

"Yeah well, see you on Monday," Miles didn't wait for Kingsley's response and hung up the call.

Kingsley couldn't help but feel guilty. Miles was one of those people that were just so innocent and adorable that if they seemed sad— you automatically felt terrible too. Even if Kinsgley had gone, it wouldn't have changed Nina cancelling her plan. But at least he could've made sure that Miles had a good time and didn't go home feeling dejected.

"Are you okay?" Lorenzo asked again, this time actually looking concerned after hearing the one sided conversation.

"Huh?" Kingsley turned to face Lorenzo, "yeah, yeah I'm okay. Just forgot I had plans."

"Hot date?" Lorenzo questioned, making Kingsley chuckle.

"Not really sure, it was supposed to be a blind double date of sorts," Kingsley shrugged.

"Oh," Lorenzo furrowed his brows, as if he actually wasn't expecting Kingsley to agree that he was about to go on a date. He cleared his throat before continuing, "sad that you couldn't make it, then. Maybe you could reschedule?"

"I doubt it, I'm not really, uh, looking to date right now," Kinsgley replied, "this was just as a favor to a friend."

"Right," Lorenzo nodded, "it probably wouldn't have been fair to the guy anyway."

"What do you mean?" Kingsley slightly tilted his head in confusion, making Lorenzo let out a dry laugh.

"It probably wouldn't be fair to lead on some other guy considering what you said to me in the voicemail last night," Lorenzo said.

Kingsley was immediately taken aback. He really believed that he deleted the voicemail instead of sending it, and now that he was caught off-guard, he didn't know how to respond. He parted his lips slightly to say something, but nothing came out.

"I... I don't know what you mean," Kingsley finally spoke.

"Your reaction says otherwise," Lorenzo retorted.

"I called you by mistake. It was meant for someone else," Kingsley attempted to lie.

"Really?" Lorenzo asked, and Kingsley nodded in response. Lorenzo took a few slow steps towards the younger man, till he was just a few inches away, "so, you don't think about me all the time?"

Kingsley was speechless once again. His loss of words made Lorenzo smirk, thinking he got the best of the man. Seeing the smug expression on his boss's face sparked something inside Kinsgley. He didn't know whether it was a matter of pride or not, but he wasn't going to be teased like this.

"What if I do?" Kingsley whispered as he walked even closer, so close that they could feel each other's breath, "what if I think about you all day? And especially all night? What would you do then, huh? Do you think I'm oblivious to your teasing? But you can't do anything more than that, can you? Can't cross any... professional boundaries?"

It was Lorenzo's time to be shocked. He wasn't expecting Kinsgely to be so bold, to call him out on exactly what he was doing. He wordlessly stared at his employee, and it was Kingsley's time to look smug.

"Thought so, sir," Kingsley said before grabbing his bag and walking out the room.

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chapter 14 is up on patreon!! link in bio.

Chapter Nine

Kingsley knew he was playing with fire.

But he loved it.

After openly challenging and walking out on a stunned Lorenzo, things were *tense* on Monday morning. But both the men had to keep their personal matters aside for the sake of the investor meeting. It was way too important to fuck up.

Kingsley believed that the meeting went well, and so did Lorenzo for the first time. He had been sceptical after all their previous meetings, but not this time. This time Lorenzo felt confident that he'd be able to save his job. One of the associates in the firm was a friend of Lorenzo's from college, and he had texted Lorenzo once the meeting was done to assure him that the deal was going to go through.

Kingsley suggested going out for drinks to celebrate, but Lorenzo told him that he would only do that once all the papers were signed. The two of them settled on lunch, though. They were both in great moods, and all the previous sexual tension had dissipated. Mostly because watching Lorenzo so happy was extremely contagious, and Kingsley couldn't help but feel the same.

"When do you think you'll hear back from them?" Kingsley asked.

"James said we should get a call by Wednesday at the latest," Lorenzo answered, "he told me everyone at the meeting was very impressed by our business model and that even though fast tracking the investment process is a huge risk, they're willing to do that for us."

"Are you going to tell the board yet?" Kingsley questioned.

"Not until I see a contract, no," Lorenzo shook his head, "I can't relax until the whole thing is signed and done."

"And it will be. Soon," Kingsley said, "then we can get a celebratory drink."

"Drink? I'll pop champagne if I get to remain the CEO," Lorenzo replied.

"I'll hold you to your word," Kingsley smirked.

The waiter kept the bill on the table, and both the men automatically reached out for it at the same time. They glanced at each other as their hands bumped, the tension from earlier slowly making its way back.

"It's on the company dime," Lorenzo reminded.

"Oh, yeah, right," Kingsley nodded as he frowned and retreated his hand.

What is wrong with me? Kingsley thought. Why was he getting worked up over something as small as their hands grazing against one another's? He felt like he was back in middle school for a moment. He had to remind himself that he was a grown adult. Especially one that didn't care about such silly things.

The two men were uncharacteristically quiet on the drive back to the office. Kingsley knew why he was being silent, but he didn't want to assume why Lorenzo was being so as well. Once they were back in the office, they finally had to part ways.

Lorenzo kept his hand on Kingsley's lower back just for a split second, as he gave him a nod before walking to his office. Kingsley stood frozen in his spot as he replayed the tiny action over and over again in his mind. Even when he was back on his desk and was supposed to be working, he just couldn't stop his brain from racing.

Something had to be seriously wrong with Kingsley that day. He was the type that couldn't even be swayed by huge romantic gestures, so why was his heart racing as he thought about the trivial little touches when it came to Lorenzo? Kingsley reminded himself once again that Lorenzo was *just* his boss.

He did want to fuck him, yes, he would never deny that. But that was it. He just wanted sex. Nothing more than that. Lorenzo was just a hot man, and the whole boss-employee thing had Kingsley a bit turned on too. But that was the bottom line.

If Kingsley ever got the chance to get in bed with Lorenzo, then good. If not, then that sucks, but he was still okay with that. What he wasn't okay was anything that exceeded that boundary. There was no way in hell that he would be caught dead catching feelings for someone.

Kingsley knew what he had to do to get rid of the nagging thoughts at the back of his head. He opened his phone, and swiped through a dating app that he hadn't used in ages. It wasn't long before he found a cute brunette, and after a short chat, they decided to meet up at a bar that Kingsley was familiar with that very night.

It wasn't a date. It was a booty call. But Kingsley always made sure to meet the person at a public place first before doing anything. You could never be too safe.

Once the clock hit five, Kingsley started to pack his things. Roan was supposed to pick him up in a few minutes, but as per his last message, he was running slightly late. Kingsley was waiting in the lobby alone when he ran into Lorenzo, who was the last one to leave the office.

"Waiting for your friend?" Lorenzo asked.

"Yeah, he should be here any minute," Kingsley replied.

"I'll give you company till then," Lorenzo said.

"That's fine, Mr. Salazar, you don't need to—"

"Come on, Reece, you can call me Lorenzo now, at least out of the office," Lorenzo said, "I'd like to think we're at that place as *friends* ."

"All my *friends* usually call me Kingsley."

"I always wondered why," Lorenzo hummed.

"There were two Reeces in my class back in primary school, or middle school, I can't really remember," Kingsley paused, "so everyone just called us by our last names. He left the school but the name still kinda just stuck."

"Ah," Lorenzo nodded, "I'll try to call you Kingsley then, no promises though. As they say, old habits die hard."

"Then I'll keep calling you Mr. Salazar," Kingsley winked at Lorenzo, "the same logic goes bothways."

"Fair enough," Lorenzo chuckled. The two stayed silent for a few moments before Lorenzo spoke up again, "so, any plans for tonight?"

"You're asking me if I have plans for a Monday night?" Kingsley rose a brow.

"God knows what you youngsters are up to now a days," Lorenzo sighed.

"You youngsters?" Kingsley chuckled, "you're only four years older than me."

"My wrinkles would beg to differ," Lorenzo joked.

"Oh, really?" Kingsley took a couple steps closer, he stared at Lorenzo's face, narrowing his eyes slightly as he faked trying to focus, before whispering, "I don't see any."

"Huh," Lorenzo inhaled deeply as he stared back into Kingsley's eyes, "you sure? Maybe you should check closer?"

"How much closer?" Kingsley asked, his voice low.

"As—"

Lorenzo was interrupted by Kingsley's phone ringing. Kingsley exhaled as he walked a few steps back and picked up the call, while Lorenzo cleared his throat and looked the other way. The two acted as if they had been caught doing something they shouldn't have been. Which was somewhat true.

"I'm waiting outside, where are you?" Roan spoke on the other end.

"I'll be there in a minute," Kingsley muttered before hanging up.

"I'll see you tomorrow. Have a good night," Lorenzo said.

"Goodnight, Lorenzo."

Kingsley made his way out after that, getting into the car with Roan. Roan noticed that something was off when even after thirty seconds of being in the car, Kingsley still hadn't said a word. Considering he was usually talkative, and starts complaining about work the moment he gets into the passenger seat, this was odd.

"What's up?"

"Tiring day at work," Kingsley answered.

"How so? Your boss finally fucked you?"

"Jesus, Roan," Kingsley groaned, "it's not funny anymore."

"Wait, did anything actually happen?" Roan asked, curious.

"No, and it probably never will," Kingsley replied, "he's too professional to fuck an employee."

"You've known that for over a year yet that has never stopped you from whining about his hot bod before," Roan pointed out.

"Yeah, but it's just different now," Kingsley sighed.

"Why?"

"Because... because I've been working with him directly for weeks now and we're—" Kingsley paused, "—we're kinda friends, I guess?"

"You don't sound very convinced," Roan noted.

"It's hard to be sure of what to think when you want to fuck someone who's your boss and also your friend and also possibly straight," Kingsley said.

"Damn," Roan whistled, "so this is why you look depressed."

"Depressed?" Kingsley scoffed, his body language and tone immediately changing, "fuck no. I don't care. I have a date tonight, anyway."

"A date?" Roan rose a questioning brow, making Kingsley roll his eyes.

"Date. Quick Fuck. Potato Tomato."

"It's actually pota— you know what? Never mind. You do you, son," Roan replied, "just cover your meat if you're going into the heat."

"Of course, daddy," Kingsley said cheekily, giving Roan a wink that the blond couldn't see as he was driving.

"Idiot."

"You started it!"

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chapter 15 up on patreon! link in bio <3

Chapter Ten

It was now Friday, and Kingsley was working at his desk. Miles and Nina were on the desk beside him, with Miles trying to flirt and miserably failing in his attempts. Just like every one in the office, Nina too, knew that Miles had a thing for her. She clearly liked him too, so Kingsley failed to understand why the two were still playing around.

Kingsley's phone vibrated, and he saw that he was getting a call from Lorenzo.

"I need to see you in my office," Lorenzo spoke as soon as Kingsley picked up the call.

"I'm just finishing up a report, I'll be there in—"

"Now, Reece."

Kingsley frowned as Lorenzo hung up without another word or elaborating on why he needed to see him. Whenever Lorenzo had to schedule a meeting, he would either email Kingsley or ask him in person. Despite the start-up culture not being very rigid, Lorenzo still wasn't casual in the way he worked. This was the first time he had called Kingsley and asked to see him. He had never been this demanding either, so Kingsley immediately knew something was up.

Kingsley made his way to Lorenzo's office, he knocked twice before entering to find Lorenzo sitting on the couch instead of his chair. His head was hanging low, and Kingsley didn't need to see his face to know that he was right in his suspicions.

"Mr. Salazar?"

"It fell through," Lorenzo said as Kingsley sat next to him, "the deal. I asked James a few times for an update but he kept stalling me, reassuring

me that that they're just drafting a contract with their lawyers. I finally heard back from them today and they pulled out."

"What? Why?" Kingsley asked, shocked, considering how confident Lorenzo was a few days ago that this was going to work out.

"I don't know," Lorenzo muttered, "they just sent a generic email apologising and saying that they can't take this forward right now but would love to work with us in the future."

"That's such bullshit! I thought they were interested in investing!" Kingsley exclaimed.

"I thought so too, but apparently we were both wrong," Lorenzo let out a dry laugh as he finally looked up, he still wasn't facing Kingsley, he ran a hand through his hair as he whispered, "I'm going to lose my fucking job. Everything that I spent years building."

"You're still going to be working here—"

"But I won't be the CEO anymore," Lorenzo's frustration was clear, and equally as valid, "I can't believe this is happening."

"There's still time, Lorenzo," Kingsley tried to be optimistic as he kept a reassuring hand on Lorenzo's knee, but the man just scoffed in response.

"This was my last hope. There's no way in hell I'd be able to find an investor in what? Two weeks? Less than that, even." Lorenzo stated.

"You've got to be positive—"

"I was, and look where it got me," Lorenzo said, "I shouldn't have relied so much on this one deal. What was I even thinking?"

"You were being hopeful."

"And once again, look where it got me."

Kingsley didn't know what to say as he lightly squeezed Lorenzo's knee. The man was looking straight ahead, but Kingsley could not take his eyes off the dejected expression on his boss's face.

This could not be it. Kingsley was not going to let Lorenzo lose his job. It was about time that he took matters in his own hands.

"Something will work out. I promise."

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It was around four, when Kingsley started getting ready to leave the office. He was a man on a mission today.

"Leaving already?" Nina asked.

"Yeah, I've got some important errands to run," Kingsley replied. Nina looked confused, but didn't question him further.

Kingsley dropped a text to Roan letting him know he won't be needing a ride, and called himself a taxi. After about twenty minutes, he was in front of a tall glass building. He looked up, staring at the name on the structure for a few moments, before walking in as if he owned the goddamn place.

He walked up to the receptionist, who greeted him politely before asking him his business.

"I'm here to see Gianni Russo," Kingsley said.

"Do you have an appointment?" The receptionist asked.

"No."

"I'm afraid you'll need one to meet Mr. Russo, he's an extremely busy man. I'll be happy to contact his secretary and book one for you, if you could just tell me your name and your motive for the meeting, but it might be a few days before Mr. Russo would be free to—"
~~~

Kingsley didn't let him finish his sentence as he took out his phone and dialled a number he hadn't called in quite some time.

"I'm at the reception," Kingsley simply stated. He muttered another 'okay' before hanging up.

The receptionist looked at the dark-haired man in confusion, but just within a minute the receptionist's phone rang.

"Yes... Okay, Ms. Carter, I'll send him right up... Okay, thank you," the receptionist looked back at Kingsley as he spoke, "Mr. Russo will see you now. He's on the top floor. Ms. Carter will be by the elevator to guide you once you reach there."

Kingsley didn't bother replying as the receptionist guided him to the elevator, using his security pass to press the button for the top floor before stepping out. As mentioned, a middle aged woman was by the elevator to guide Kingsley as he reached the top floor. She led him to the office of the man he wanted to meet, and soon enough, he was facing the man he hadn't seen in years.

"Reece," Gianni Russo greeted, "what brings you here today?"

"Straight to the point? What? No hug for your only son?" Kingsley retorted.

He knew he was being tough, but he didn't exactly have the best relationship with his absent father. The only relationship they did have was financial, and that was why he was there today.

"I doubt you're here just for a hug," Gianni replied, he wasn't wrong. "So, what is it?"

Kingsley sighed as he took out his chequebook from the inner pocket of his coat, before bending down and filling out a cheque. He tore it, before sliding it towards his father.

"What is this?"

"I want you to invest this money in a company," Kingsley answered.

"And why can't you do it yourself?" Gianni questioned, looking a bit puzzled.

"It's complicated," Kingsley hesitated, but he knew he would have to elaborate, "this is where I work. So, nobody can know that the money is coming from me."

"I see," Gianni nodded as he looked at the number of zeroes on the piece of paper, "this is quite a substantial amount."

"Thanks to Meemaw," Kingsley replied.

He was quite close to his maternal grandparents growing up. 'Kingsley' was his Meemaw's maiden name too. Being their only grandson, once they passed away when Kingsley was around fourteen, they left their entire inheritance to him. Kingsley received it all when he was eighteen, but he never touched a penny of it, he never needed to, until now.

"Ah."

"I'm sure you have some offshore companies. This cannot trace back to me, I hope you understand that," Kingsley reiterated.

"I understand," Gianni nodded, "I'll get this done."

"Soon. Within a week. This is more than the amount they're trying to raise, so I also want you to demand that the current CEO stays. Tell them you won't invest otherwise," Kingsley said.

"I see," Gianni replied, "this seems important to you."

"It is," Kinsgley agreed.

"Important enough that you'll have dinner with your father once I get this done?"

" *If* you get this done, then sure," Kingsley didn't want to, but he knew he had to. He would owe his father that much.

"It was good to see you, Reece," Gianni said, "I can tell you've grown into quite a smart young man."

"Maybe if you were around a bit more you could've seen it happen as it did," Kingsley replied bitterly.

"That is one of my biggest regrets," Gianni admitted, making his son scoff.

"Whatever you say," Kingsley shrugged, "let me know when it's done."

"I will. I am already looking forward to our dinner."

Even though Kingsley didn't particularly admire his father, on the odd occasion that he ever needed help— Gianni didn't fail him. So, Kingsley knew that he could trust him with this, and with saving Lorenzo's job.

As Kingsley walked out of the building, he didn't even know why he did what he just did. He had no obligation whatsoever to spend so much money to help out Lorenzo. But he still felt compelled to do so. He tried his hardest to rationalise it in one way or the other. But he couldn't come up with any logical explanation.

At the end, he settled on believing that it was because he liked having Lorenzo as his boss and that it would suck to work under some sixty year old geezer. He did it for himself, for his own selfish reasons and not because he cared about anyone else.

That was it. That was why he did what he did. That was why he went to the man he spent his entire life despising, kept his pride aside, and straight-up asked for help.

As Kingsley got in a cab to go back home, he had a subconscious smile on his face, knowing that Lorenzo would be ecstatic when he gets to know his job in his own company is safe. No matter how much Kingsley tried not to think about it, to not think about Lorenzo, it still filled Kingsley's chest with warmth that he hadn't felt in years.

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chapter 16 is up on Patreon! link in bio.

Chapter Eleven

"Come on in," Miles said, welcoming Kingsley inside his apartment.

"Nice," Kingsley whistled as he looked around, "I like this better than your old place."

Miles had recently moved into a new building, and had invited Kingsley, Nina, and Anwar over. He invited a couple of older colleagues too, but they politely excused themselves from it.

"Thanks, so do I," Miles replied.

"Didn't know what we were drinking so I got both," Kingsley said as he handed Miles a bottle of wine and a six pack of beer. His idea of a housewarming present.

"I actually made margaritas."

" *Ooh* , cocktail night," Kingsley grinned, "you tryna impress Nina?"

"Dude, sh," Miles nervously looked back, "she's already here with Anwar."

"My bad," Kingsley chuckled.

It was a weekday and they all had work in the morning, but Nina wasn't free on the weekend so Miles, obviously, decided to shift his house warming to a day when Nina could make it as well.

Kingsley had planned on leaving early, right after dinner. And not drinking much. He had been recently going to work with a hangover more often than he liked. But it was almost midnight and all four of them were still sitting around the table, drinking and talking.

Miles decided to showcase his talents and made some experimental cocktails. Apparently he had done a bartending course in college. Kingsley

was actually impressed, and so was Nina.

"So, are you going to tell us what's happening?" Anwar asked Kingsley, who just looked at him in confusion.

"What do you mean?" Kingsley questioned back.

"Come on, dude, all the overtime and working alone with the boss," Anwar paused, "and all these *meetings?* I think we all know what's going on."

"And what is that?" Kingsley asked, he didn't know why but his heart had started beating faster. He blamed the alcohol.

"Are there going to be lay offs?" Anwar asked.

" *That* is what you think is happening?" Kingsley blinked, finally relaxing. It was weird considering he and Lorenzo hadn't even done anything. Yet. Apart from their teasing and passive flirting, of course.

"What else? You've both been hella secretive since you started working directly with Lorenzo and you both keep going to investor meetings," Anwar clarified, "if people are gonna lose their jobs then we ought to know, man."

"What am I hearing about lay offs?" Miles pitched in, "I can't lose my job, dude, I just got this apartment."

"There aren't going to be any lay offs," Kingsley sighed, "I'm not at liberty to discuss what I've been working on with Mr. Salazar, it's confidential."

"Alright, keep your secrets," Anwar replied. He was just glad to know he wouldn't be losing his job. Apart from that, he didn't really care what Lorenzo and Kingsley were working on and what all the investment meetings were for.

"Do you want to bet on how long it takes these two to finally get together?" Kingsley said as he motioned towards Nina and Miles.

They were once again busy in their own little world near the mini bar where Miles was making their next round of drinks. They were gazing into each other's eyes as they talked, Nina was leaning forward and Miles had a toothy grin the entire time.

"Watching these two is worse than reading a romance novel where the protagonists finally kiss in the last chapter," Anwar sighed.

"What?"

"What what?" Anwar retorted, "fifty bucks say they start dating by Thanksgiving."

"Hundred bucks on New Year's Eve," Kingsley replied.

"Nah, I bet they're gonna stare into each other's eyes and talk about how thankful they are for the other one," Anwar explained.

"That would warrant a hug or maybe a kiss on the cheek," Kingsley argued, "but when the clock ticks down to midnight on new year? That sets up the perfect opportunity."

"Oh, shit," Anwar said, "you might have a point there."

"Get ready to pay up," Kingsley smirked, "I accept cash or a good bottle of whiskey."

"What are you two talking about?" Nina asked as the not-couple walked up to them.

"Kingsley's unfortunate gambling addiction," Anwar answered.

"Really?" Miles asked. Kingsley wanted to laugh at how gullible the man was, he wondered how he made it this far in life with his innocence.

"Yeah, I bet on—" Kingsley paused, "—horses?"

"Yep, poor guy lost a few rounds and is in debt now, we were just talking about professional help," Anwar added.

"Oh, if you ever need anything then—"

"You both are such assholes," Nina rolled her eyes, clearly not buying any of it, "Miles, you were telling me something about your cousin?"

Kingsley and Anwar could not help but chuckle. Miles just shrugged it off and started telling them a story about his cousin's wedding. It was around one in the morning when Kingsley decided to head back. He shared a cab with Anwar, whose apartment was on Kingsley's way to his own place.

Kingsley had controlled his alcohol intake, so thankfully he wasn't hungover the next day at work. The first thing he noticed in the morning was that he had an email from Lorenzo.

See me in my office after 5.

Kingsley stared at the sentence, feeling excited already. It felt like time was passing by extra slow as he waited for the work hours to be over. He didn't see Lorenzo the entire day, the boss stayed in his office and did not make any rounds like he usually did. That kind of worried Kingsley, but he didn't want to make any assumptions.

Once the clock ticked five, everyone started leaving but Kingsley stayed at his desk. None of his co-workers questioned that, they all knew he worked overtime quite often now a days.

When he was the only one left, Kingsley finally got up to go to Lorenzo's office. Like usual, he knocked twice before entering. Lorenzo looked up from his laptop, giving Kingsley a smile as he closed the screen. Kingsley immediately relaxed, and sat down.

Lorenzo got up from his chair and walked towards Kingsley, he leaned back on the table right beaide his employee, looking down at him with a serious expression.

"What do you know about the Russo Group?" Lorenzo asked.

"Uh," Kingsley started panicking again, "not much."

"Well, it's a huge corporation and they're basically in the food and hospitality industry but—" Lorenzo broke into a grin, "—one of their newer subsidiaries invests in tech start-ups. They heard we were looking for funding through the grapevine and guess what?"

"We got the funds?"

"We got the funds! More than we were expecting in this round." The happiness on Lorenzo's face was unmatched, and Kingsley couldn't help but smile back, "they streamined the whole process and the papers got signed today. They apparently had great things to say about me to the board so my job is safe."

"I told you it would all work out," Kingsley said.

"I still can't believe it," Lorenzo walked back around the desk, "they just reached out to the board out of the blue and it all actually worked out. I had almost made peace with not being the CEO anymore..."

"Forget about that now, you're still the boss," Kingsley stated.

"It's a miracle, I swear," Lorenzo sighed happily as he opened one of the drawers of his desk, "I wanted you to be the first to know about this deal. I'll announce it to everyone else during the next Monday meeting."

"I'll keep quiet, as usual," Kingsley nodded.

"And another reason for calling you here after work was that, well, I'm a man of my word," Lorenzo said as he pulled out a bottle of champagne from his drawer, matching grins on the faces of both the men. He popped the bottle open, making Kingsley laugh, "shit, I forgot glasses."

"No need," Kingsley said as he took the bottle from Lorenzo's hand, and taking a huge chug straight from it.

"I suppose that's an option as well," Lorenzo chuckled before doing the same.

It didn't take long for both the men to settle down on the couch, to get more comfortable. They took turns drinking from the bottle as they spoke about random things here and there. Kingsley couldn't remember the last time he felt this at ease or this happy.

It was weird how enraged he was when Lorenzo was upset, and how content he felt seeing the man be cheery. Lorenzo's mood was contagious.

"I seriously cannot thank you enough, Reece," Lorenzo started, seemingly a little tipsy now that the bottle was empty, "you've been working so hard these past couple months, and I honestly could not have done this without you. I know I was tough whenever you tried to stay positive but... I'm glad you did that. I needed it."

"It's..." Kingsley was speechless at Lorenzo's confession, "it's just my job."

"Don't be modest, you did way more than what your job description requires," Lorenzo argued.

"Maybe I deserve a raise next quarter," Kingsley attempted to joke.

"You deserve more than that," Lorenzo's voice was low now, almost a whisper as they stared into each other's eyes, "so much more."

Kingsley stayed quiet, and it was only then that he noticed the proximity between him and Lorenzo. They both had subconsciously moved closer in their conversation, and were barely a few inches away.

All of a sudden, Kingsley found it harder to breathe. It was like the air had gotten heavier, and Kingsley couldn't focus anymore. All he could think about was how close he was to the man he had been lusting for over a year. If either of them were to move just a little bit...

Lorenzo's gaze didn't leave Kingsley's eyes, and Kingsley was ready to sell all his belongings just to be able to read Lorenzo's mind in that moment. He wanted to know what the other man was thinking. If he wanted Kingsley as much as Kingsley wanted him. He wanted to know if he was just being

delusional in his fantasies. Or if there was a little chance of them ever coming true.

All of Kingsley's questions were answered soon, as Lorenzo leaned forward.

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c

hapter 17 now up patreon! link in bio.

Chapter Twelve

Kingsley closed his eyes as he inhaled deeply. Lorenzo's lips were on Kingsley's neck, as he kissed the soft, hot skin. He gripped the couch, his nails digging into the fabric as he stayed motionless.

Lorenzo pulled back, he was looking at Kingsley with an expression that the younger man couldn't decipher. The moment Kingsley had been waiting for for so long was finally there, and he was hit by a wave of different emotions.

Lust. Longing. Excitement. Relief. Fear.

Lorenzo kept his hand on Kingsley's cheek, trailing it down slowly. His rough fingers grazed Kingsley's jaw and neck as Lorenzo unbuttoned the top button of Kingsley's shirt, before gently pushing him down on the couch.

Lorenzo straddled Kingsley, their crotches near but not rubbing against each other's yet. Kingsley wanted that, though. He wanted to feel Lorenzo. Every inch of him.

Lorenzo loosened his tie, but didn't take it off. He had taken his suit jacket off before Kingsley even came to his office. He ran his hand across Kingsley's exposed chest, before unbottoning it even further.

Kingsley was just looking at Lorenzo in disbelief. He had wanted this for so long, and now that it was happening, he didn't know how to react or what to do. He was experienced in this, but at that moment he felt like he was paralysed.

"Is this okay?" Lorenzo finally spoke up. Kingsley wondered if it was because he noticed how frozen Kingsley was.

"More than okay," Kingsley answered softly.

Lorenzo had completely unbuttoned Kingsley's shirt, but didn't remove it. He rubbed his hand up and down Kingsley's chest and abdomen, feeling every inch of his skin under his palm. Kingsley closed his eyes, enjoying how the simple touch was making him feel. He wondered if Lorenzo could feel how fast his heart was beating beneath his chest, and he wondered if Lorenzo's was at a similar pace.

Lorenzo bent down to kiss his employee's chest, he took Kingsley's nipple in his mouth, his tongue swirling around the hardened bud. Kingsley wanted to pull Lorenzo closer, to connect their lips, but for some reason he couldn't bring himself to touch the other man. His hands were gripping the couch so hard, his knuckles were turning white.

Lorenzo repeated the same action with Kingsley's other nipple, before kissing up to his neck and jaw. He gently bit Kingsley's earlobe, as his hand grabbed Kingsley's erection through his pants, making Kingsley open his eyes with a surprised moan.

"The day you walked into the interview room, I just knew there was something about you," Lorenzo whispered in Kingsley's ear, "I wanted you that very instant."

"I wouldn't call myself easy but—" Kingsley's voice was equally low, "—for you I would've bent over your desk that very first day."

"I know." There was a smirk on Lorenzo's face, "do you think I never noticed how your eyes would follow my every move whenever we were in the same room? Sometimes you were so busy eye-fucking me that you didn't even notice you were caught."

"I thought I was being dis— ah— discreet," Kingsley finished his sentence between moans as Lorenzo's hand slowly rubbed his clothed cock.

"You thought wrong, *cariño."* Hearing Lorenzo talk in Spanish turned on Kingsley even more. "I noticed everything. Your staring, your flirting, you've always been such a tease."

"Oh yeah? Sounds like I've been bad," Kingsley said softly.

He finally wrapped one hand around the back of Lorenzo's neck, and tangled his other hand's fingers in the man's hair. He spread his legs just enough to hook one knee around Lorenzo. Lorenzo got the hint and repositioned himself so that their dicks were against each other's, before slowly grounding his hips.

"Very bad," Lorenzo said, "this is bad too. Wrong. So wrong but I want you."

"You have me exactly where it counts," Kingsley said as he worked on unbuckling Lorenzo's pants. It was a bit of a struggle, but he was finally able to free the other man's erection, before gripping it in his palm, "does this feel wrong too?"

"No." It was Lorenzo's time to moan. To show just how much he ached for the other man's touch.

"Tell me, do you ever imagine me sucking you off?" Kinsgley asked as he rubbed his thumb across Lorenzo's slit, slowly, to tease him.

"More times than I'd like to admit, I've lost count now," Lorenzo answered.

"Oh yeah? In this office?" Kingsley smirked.

"Yes."

"And where exactly in this office do I suck you in your fantasies?" Kingsley asked, when Lorenzo didn't answer, Kingsley continued, "tell me so that I can make your dreams come true."

Lorenzo stared into Kingsley's eyes, the lust so clearly visible. Lorenzo got up from on top of the other man, and Kingsley immediately missed the warmth. He didn't want to let him go. Lorenzo started unbuttoning his own shirt, his gaze still on Kingsley as he gave him a show.

Lorenzo's shirt was open, but he didn't remove it from his shoulders. He didn't remove his tie either. But he did take off his pants, and his briefs in a single go before stepping out of them. Kingsley was finally able to fully see

what he was going to be playing with, and he really liked what was in sight. He subconsciously licked his lips as he stared at Lorenzo.

Lorenzo turned around to walk over to his desk, unfortunately his long shirt covered his ass, so Kingsley wasn't able to get a good look. Lorenzo sat on his chair, his legs slightly spread apart as his eyes found the other man again. He raised a finger towards Kingsley, motioning him to come towards him.

Kingsley didn't need anything more than that, the invitation was clear. He got up from the couch and took off his shirt, but not his pants as he walked over to Lorenzo, immediately dropping down on his knees so that he was face to face with the prize.

"Most of my fantasies were of you doing this during office hours. When I'm working or on a call, but I suppose this will have to suffice," Lorenzo said.

Kingsley let out a little chuckle before grabbing a hold of Lorenzo's dick. Lorenzo sighed deeply as he rested his head back and closed his eyes. Kingsley started slow, kissing and licking, making it wet for him to be able to suck it smoothly.

The foreplay was clearly getting too much for Lorenzo, as he kept his hand on Kingsley's head, a sign that he wanted more. Kingsley finally took Lorenzo in, but just the tip. He ran his tongue across the slit, earning a loud moan from his boss.

Lorenzo's grip on Kingsley's hair tightened with each inch that Kingsley took in. Lorenzo was looking down at the dark-haired man, watching as his dick disappeared in his mouth. Kingsley was a sucker for eye contact during blow jobs, it didn't matter which side of it he was on.

Kingsley played with Lorenzo's balls as he sucked him, Lorenzo was helping him, raising his hips to meet Kingsley's mouth. It took them a few seconds to get the rhythm right, but they did. No matter how experienced Kingsley was, his jaw wasn't made of steel and it did start to hurt after some time.

He pulled back, and his hand took over. He jerked off Lorenzo's cock as his mouth went lower to suck on his balls, the sudden action made Lorenzo shiver in pleasure, as he once again couldn't keep his eyes open.

Kingsley alternated between his mouth and his hand, and soon enough he felt Lorenzo let go of his hair to grip the handles of his chair instead. Kingsley knew what that meant.

"I'm about to cum," Lorenzo whispered.

Kingsley took him in his mouth again, he sucked at his tip as his hands worked on the base of Lorenzo's cock. Just a few seconds later, Lorenzo came inside Kingsley's mouth.

Kingsley wiped his lips with the back of his palm before looking up at a shook and panting Lorenzo.

"Fuck," Lorenzo's breath was heavy, "that was... wow. Fuck. I didn't even ask if I could cum in your mouth."

"I didn't pull back because I wanted you to," Kingsley replied, "I wanted to taste you."

Lorenzo looked down at Kingsley, and from his expression the dark-haired man could tell that Lorenzo's thirst was still not quenched. He wanted more. And Kingsley was ready for anything.

"Well," Lorenzo said, "now it's your turn to tell me one of your fantasies, and my turn to make it come true."

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since it's the start of a new month, i posted a double update of King's Guard Chapter 18, and Delicate Chapter 35 on my Patreon! link in bio <3

Chapter Thirteen

question : how's 2022 going for you?

****

Kingsley walked inside the massive building after giving his car keys to the valet. He was wearing one of his more expensive suits, unlike the cheaper ones he wore at work.

His father had reached out to him a day earlier, asking him if he was still interested in having dinner with him. Kingsley wasn't, but he was a man of his word and he had promised his father he would do it if Gianni was able to help him out successfully.

Kingsley recalled what happened with him and Lorenzo on Friday after work in his office, and the memory was enough to motivate him to tolerate the next hour or two. It was worth it.

The attendant led him to the private booth where his father was already seated and waiting for him. Kingsley sat opposite of him as the server poured them a glass of wine that his father had doubt selected in advance.

"I'm glad you're here, Reece," Gianni said, "part of me wasn't expecting you to show up."

"I told you I would, so here I am," Kingsley said before taking a sip of the wine, the smooth flavor pleasing his taste buds.

"I hope your little problem was solved and that things at work are going well now?" Gianni asked.

"They are," Kingsley paused, he bit his tongue lightly before continuing, "thank you for helping me out."

"No need. Even though it's part of the Russo Group, you're the sole owner of the subsidiary I used to invest, but your name isn't in any public records. The information is confidential so nobody will find out," Gianni explained.

"I'm the owner?" Kingsley frowned, "I don't recall this."

"Did you not read the papers I sent over for you to sign on your nineteenth birthday?" Gianni asked in disbelief.

"Not really," Kingsley muttered.

"Always get a lawyer to double check whatever it is that you're signing," Gianni sighed, "even if the papers are from your father."

"Noted."

"When you told me you were majoring in computer science, I decided to start the company for you. I assumed you could lead it after graduating. I was surprised when you didn't reach out to me about it, but now I see why."

"You could've just dropped me a text yourself," Kingsley muttered as he looked over the menu.

"Fair enough. I also wanted to tell you that there's a place for you in my company—"

"I'm perfectly content in my current job," Kingsley said, "I know it might not meet your standards but... I'm happy."

"That's all I care about you, Reece," Gianni assured, "even though my position was passed to me by my father, and to him by his, if you don't wish to take over after me then I understand. I don't want to pressure you."

"Good. Because you can't," Kingsley stated.

"There will always be a place for you with me regardless," Gianni said, "I know I haven't been the ideal father but I would like to try to be one now."

"Having dinner once together in two decades isn't going to make our non existent relationship any better," Kingsley said.

"I know," Gianni sighed, "I hope you know your mother and I did what we thought was best for you."

"How is abandoning a child best for him?" Kingsley asked in disbelief, "are you really delusional enough to believe that?"

"Do you know what kind of life you would've led if you grew up with either of us?" Gianni asked, "constantly surrounded by reporters. No privacy at all. Every word and action of yours getting scrutinised by the public. That's no way for a child to grow up. It's no way for even an adult to live their life."

"At least I would've had a mother or a father," Kingsley retorted, "and don't lie to me. Neither of you wanted the media to know a middle aged businessman impregnated an up and coming actress. Bad press for both of you."

"That is not true, and we didn't leave you completely alone, Reece, you still had—"

"Meemaw until she passed away. And then who? Tony the butler?" Kingsley scoffed.

"I know it wasn't ideal but—" Gianni paused, "—but I'm not going to make any excuses. I was wrong in thinking it was the best way to raise a child. I should've been there with you, as your father."

"Happy realisation," Kingsley muttered as he took a sip of the wine. He couldn't deal with this sober.

"I want to make up for it, Reece. I really hope you give me the chance to do so now," Gianna stated.

"Seriously?" Kingsley asked, "you seriously think you can make up for it now? Just because you helped me out doesn't mean I'm going to give you

another shot at playing dad."

"I didn't help you out with that intention, no," Gianni frowned, "I know nothing can make up for it but I still want to try."

"Yeah, no."

"I... I had a stroke some time back," Gianni confessed, and Kingsley finally looked up at him, "I really thought I was on my death bed, and it gave me a chance to revaluate a lot of things—"

"Look, if you're trying to manipulate me with a sob story then that's not going to work," Kingsley stated, but his voice was no longer as strong as before.

"I understand that is how it's coming across but it's true," Gianni paused, "my biggest regret in life is not being around you. Not being your father. I will spend the rest of my life trying to repent, only if you'd let me."

"I..." Kingsley inhaled deeply, before whispering, "it's too late. Twenty three years too late."

"You were on my mind the entire time I was in the hospital bed. When you came to my office... That was my first day back at work. And you showing up that very day made me feel like it was a sign from the universe. That I was being given an opportunity to right my biggest wrong."

"Listen—"

"Just one chance, Reece, just one last chance," Gianni said, staring at Kingsley with a painful expression.

Kingsley gulped, even though he was an absent one, Gianni was still his father. He thought about it, what could possibly go wrong by letting his father make up for lost time? If there was anything he had learned from movies, it was that life was too short to hold grudges.

His final decision came from a place of guilt and fear, too. He couldn't help but think that if his father was, godforbid, to get sick again, then not giving

him a chance would always haunt him. That's it, Kingsley thought. He was doing it from a place of selfishness, not because he cared. He didn't need his father. He was just doing it to save himself from any future guilt.

This thought made him calm down. Being emotionally vulnerable was Kingsley's biggest fear. So, convincing himself that he was just being selfish made him feel better in a twisted way.

"Okay," Kingsley finally said, "if you want to play dad, then go ahead."

"Thank you, Reece, you have no idea how happy this makes me."

"Did you tell mother about the stroke?" Kingsley asked, trying to change the topic.

"I haven't spoken to your mother since you turned eighteen," Gianni answered.

"Well," Kingsley let out a dry laugh as he motioned for the server to come take their orders, "at least we have one thing in common."

The dinner after that went surprisingly well. Gianni was geniunely interested in hearing about Kingsley and learning more about his life. It was hard for Kingsley to open up to him, and he couldn't help but make the occasional snarky remarks, but overall, it went fine. Tolerable at the very least.

The food, too, was amazing. For someone as rich as Kingsley, it was surprising how often he ordered from fast food chains and not high end restaurants. He wondered if he should get a personal chef.

Once the dinner was over, Kingsley's father left to go to meet the manager of the restaurant. He always did that whenever he visited any of his hotels or restaurants. Kingsley was on his way out, when his eyes fell on a familiar face.

It was Lorenzo. Having dinner with a woman. Kingsley was a little far, and Lorenzo wasn't directly facing him. Besides, he was too engrossed in

whatever conversation was going on with the woman.

All of a sudden, Kingsley felt panic run through his entire body. He stood frozen, watching Lorenzo for a few seconds, before shaking his head and bringing himself back to reality. He made his way out of the restaurant carefully as to not alert Lorenzo of his presence.

He drove home, got changed and immediately went to bed. A hundred different questions and scenarios running through his mind.

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chapter 19 is up on patreon! link in bio. fyi, updates on patreon are 4 weeks ahead of wattpad.

also, I read some comments about my smut being too detailed... are those complaints I hear? ;)

Chapter Fourteen

"—that's it for the meeting today, you all can get back to work now," Lorenzo finished. Everyone started leaving, when the boss spoke up again, "Reece? Can you stay for a moment?"

"Sure," Kingsley replied.

He sat back down on the conference table, whereas Lorenzo stood and watched everyone slowly disperse from the room. Kingsley was openly staring at the man, wondering what this could be about. He hadn't spoken to Lorenzo since Friday, so he was excited to finally be alone with him.

Once everyone had left, Lorenzo walked over to Kingsley and got seated next to him.

"I asked you to stay behind because..." Lorenzo paused, his eyes on Kingsley, "I want you to be our main point of contact with the Russo Group, well, with whoever is in charge of their subsidiary."

"Me?" Kingsley could feel the color draining from his skin, "why me?"

"Do you really need to ask that?" Lorenzo rose his brows, "you've been working way too hard for this. This is a great opportunity and you deserve this."

As the anonymous owner of the company, Kingsley wasn't sure what the legalities were of him being the point of contact. But it all seemed way too complicated.

"I think you should give this work to Nina," Kingsley finally said, making Lorenzo frown, "she's much better suited than me for this, and you know she's a very hard worker."

"She is, no doubt, but you've already been working for—"

"I'm more of a behind the scenes guy, I mean, a few meetings are fine but I'm really more happy working in front of a screen, you know? I don't think I'd be right for this," Kingsley replied.

"I suppose I forgot I hired you as a web developer after all these weeks of working together," Lorenzo nodded understandingly.

"Yep. Public relations for a nerd like me? Not the best fit," Kingsley reiterated.

"Fair enough," Lorenzo said, "I'll talk to Nina. You're right."

"Yeah..."

Kingsley stared at Lorenzo, finally a bit relaxed. He couldn't tell what Lorenzo was thinking, he hated how he could never guess what his expressions meant. Not like he was very good at reading people, but he would've liked to at least have an idea.

"You can go back to work now. Ask Nina to see me in my office in fifteen, please," Lorenzo said as he got up from the chair to walk to the head of the table, where all his stuff was.

"Right, okay," Kingsley muttered. He was expecting a little something more. But he should've known Lorenzo was too professional to do anything, at least in office hours.

Disappointed, Kingsley walked out of the conference room and to his cubicle. He didn't know what he was expecting, it's not like Lorenzo was going to touch him when there was the whole office behind the glass doors. Kingsley informed Nina that Lorenzo wanted to see him, and she frowned.

"What for?" Nina asked.

"Some work," Kingsley muttered, not in the mood anymore.

"Okay," Nina replied, looking a bit suspicious, "did you hear about Walter Clark?"

"Who?"

"The COO of SoulTech," Nina answered.

"No, what about him?" Kingsley asked.

"He was fired."

"Why?"

"Slept with a subordinate, apparently they had been doing that for over a year before the cleaning lady walked in on them in his office at night," Nina said, "it's all over the news, have you been living under a rock?"

"Kind of," Kingsley muttered.

"Same happened with this Wall Street guy last week. Do men not learn? I mean, how horny do you have to be to risk your entire career just for some action?" Nina scoffed.

"You'll be late."

"Huh?"

"Your meeting with Mr. Salazar," Kingsley said.

"Oh, yeah."

When Nina left, Kingsley turned to his laptop to google Walter Clark. And then the Wall Street guy. A wave of panic ran through his body as he read about how their careers were down the drain. The higher the position, lower the downfall. On top of that, Lorenzo was also somewhat of a public figure. If it ever got out that he was sleeping with an employee, social media would be the first one to put him on the guillotine.

Kingsley remembered what his father told him. How if Kingsley grew up with either of his parents then he would constantly be under the spotlight. The thought of no privacy, and all his actions being judged by anyone and everyone brought an instant frown on his face.

Kingsley always kept himself first. He had spent a lot of time and money in securing Lorenzo's position as the CEO. He didn't want Lorenzo's career destroyed just because Kingsley couldn't keep it in his pants. He didn't want his efforts going to waste.

So, for his very selfish reasons, Kingsley decided that what happened on friday could never happen again.

On cue, Nina and Lorenzo walked out of the boss's office. Nina was smiling as she spoke, and Kingsley could guess that she was excited about the opportunity. He watched as Lorenzo smiled back at her. He then laughed, and Kingsley inhaled deeply.

Lorenzo's suit jacket was off, and he folded his arms in front of his chest, making his biceps flex as he did so. As if he felt eyes on him, Lorenzo looked towards Kingsley. Kingsley should've looked away, but he just couldn't.

Lorenzo gave him a lopsided smile, which Kingsley failed to return. He whipped his head back towards his laptop. Having to tell Lorenzo that he didn't want a repeat of Friday was going to be tough. And it was going to be even tougher to actually practice what he had decided.

He didn't look away from the screen until Nina came up to him.

"Thank you for the recommendation," Nina said as she reached her cubicle, "I owe you one."

"I know how you can pay me back," Kingsley replied.

"How?"

"Don't play with Miles," Kingsley answered. Miles had left after the morning meeting to go for work he had outside of the office.

"What do you mean?" Nina asked with a frown.

"Come on, you know what I mean," Kingsley turned his chair to face the woman. "Everyone in the office knows about your... you know."

"Oh," Nina blinked, "everyone?"

"Everyone," Kingsley nodded, "you know the man is a bit shy, and he's been trying to make the first move in his own way."

"I know," Nina sighed, "but workplace relationships are so complicated! What if we date and then break up? It would be so awkward to work with him then."

"Hey, I'm not going to tell you to live in the moment and go for it or any of that bullshit," Kingsley paused, "all I can say is that communicate whatever doubts you have with Miles. Just don't lead him on if you don't want to date someone who you work with. Tell him that so that he can move on."

"You care about him," Nina noted, making Kingsley scoff.

"I'm just tired of being the third wheel with your constant flirting," Kingsley argued as he turned his chair back towards his desk.

"Aw," Nina chuckled, "wittle Kingsley can't admit that he cares about his friends?"

"I don't know what gave you the impression that I'm anything but a self centred asshole," Kingsley muttered.

"Whatever you say," Nina replied in a sing-song tone.

"We don't get paid to gossip, don't make me go to HR," Kingsley joked. Nina raised her hands in defense, chuckling as she faced her laptop as well, before going back to work.

Kingsley had a hard time focusing on work. Eveytime he closed his eyes, all he would see was Lorenzo's face. And this was starting to really piss him off. What kind of magic had Lorenzo done on him, that made Kingsley so incapable of even thinking about anything else?

Hours passed by, and Kingsley was still unable to get Lorenzo off his mind. He went through what he was going to say to him in his head over and over again.

"Are you coming?" Nina asked.

"Where?" Kingsley questioned back.

"Didn't you read the group chat?" Nina sighed when Kingsley shook his head, "Anwar and Miles said they'd meet us for lunch at taco bell."

"Oh, uh, you go, I'm not in the mood today," Kingsley said.

"Not in the mood for taco bell? Damn..."

Nina didn't push further, and Kingsley was glad about that. Once she left, he went over to Lorenzo's office. He took a deep breath in before knocking, he entered once he heard Lorenzo say 'come in'.

"Oh, hey Reece," Lorenzo said, looking up from the file on his desk.

"Yeah, hi, uh," Kingsley's mind immediately went blank, "I was wondering if we could talk."

"I see," Lorenzo straightened his back, as he slightly leaned behind on the chair, "about something work related?"

"I'm afraid not," Kingsley muttered.

"I don't think this is the right time or place then," Lorenzo said, "I was meaning to call you over the weekend but unfortunately I had some prior commitments."

"Right," Kingsley remembered how he saw Lorenzo at the restaurant just the night before. With a woman he didn't recognise.

"Would you like to get dinner tonight?" Lorenzo asked.

"Tonight?" Kingsley pressed his lips in a thin line before answering. "Sure. Where do I meet you?"

"What was the name of the, uh, the cute diner on twenty second street?"

"Nico's."

"Right. Nico's. I'll see you there at seven?" Lorenzo asked.

"Sure."

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chapter 19 is up on patreon. link in bio.

Chapter Fifteen

I'm very sorry, some urgent work came up and I won't be able to make it to dinner. I'm ordering Chinese though, maybe we can eat at my place?

Kingsley read the message from Lorenzo over and over again. He had sent another message with his address, without waiting for Kingsley's reply first. The dark-haired man knew that if his boss was paying attention then he would be aware that Kingsley had opened his messages over eight minutes ago, and was yet to text back.

Kingsley had prepared himself to tell Lorenzo that he would like to remain professional. That he wanted to draw boundaries. He had mentally psyched himself for having this conversation in one of the booths of the diner; a public place. But Lorenzo just had to throw a curve ball and invite him over.

Kingsley absolutely did *not* trust his resolve. Especially not when he was going to be alone with Lorenzo. But he knew he had to. He couldn't risk Lorenzo's job, not when he had bent over backwards to save it.

Kingsley texted him back, letting him know that he'd be there in thirty. Surprisingly, Lorenzo only lived a few blocks away. Or maybe it wasn't that shocking considering both of them lived in a rich neighborhood.

Kingsley decided to take a shower, after which he got dressed in a grey button down shirt and black jeans. He looked at himself in the mirror, remembering how Cole always complained about his dress sense. Kingsley never cared about branded clothing, and back in school he mostly showed up in band t-shirts and sweatpants, much to his ex's dismay.

After grabbing his wallet, keys and phone, Kingsley left his penthouse. Apparently Lorenzo had already told the doorman about Kingsley's arrival, so he was quickly buzzed in. Lorenzo lived on the eighteenth floor, and Kingsley made his way to the boss's front door.

He ran a hand through his hair, cursing internally when he realised it was still wet from the shower. Why did he assume his hair would dry in a ten minute walk?

"Here goes nothing," Kingsley muttered to himself before knocking.

Kingsley tapped his foot, feeling impatient as Lorenzo took his sweet time (forty seconds) to open the door. Kingsley's eyes raked in the view in front of him, it was his first time seeing Lorenzo dressed casually. He was wearing a plain white t-shirt with grey sweatpants. Definitely a gay man's weakness.

Kingsley sighed. Why, oh why, did Lorenzo have to wear that. A hot man in grey sweatpants was a wet dream of anyone that swung that way.

"Hey, come on in," Lorenzo moved aside to let Kingsley enter, which he did without saying a word. Lorenzo closed the door shut, before continuing, "I'm really sorry about all this. Jiya called me an hour ago and told me the new COO of SoulTech wants to have a meeting first thing tomorrow morning to discuss—"

"It's okay," Kingsley interrupted him, "work can be unpredictable, I get it."

"Yeah, but again, I apologise," Lorenzo said.

"And once again, it's fine," Kingsley said as Lorenzo led him to the living room, "do you need any help with it?"

"Actually, I wouldn't mind. I just have a few slides left to make and maybe you could give them a look?"

"Sure."

With both of them working together, it didn't take long before Lorenzo was done with the pending work. They only took a five minute break in between to order dinner, and now the two were sitting on the couch, with a drink in their hand.

"So, what is it that you wanted to talk about?" Lorenzo asked. The two of them were sitting on opposite ends of the couch. Lorenzo had one arm resting on top of the couch as he tilted his body to face Kingsley.

"What happened on friday," Kingsley answered. Lorenzo continued staring intently at the man, as he raised his glass to his lips and took a long sip of his scotch, his eyes never leaving the younger man.

"What about it?" Lorenzo questioned again.

Kingsley gulped. He didn't know why he was feeling nervous. This wasn't his first rodeo, he had ended things with men more times than he could count on his fingers.

"Well, um, it was—"

"Look, Reece, I have to stop you right there," Lorenzo sighed as he kept his drink on the table, before facing Kingsley again. "I'm sure you know what happened to the old COO of SoulTech, if you don't, then he got fired for sleeping with an employee."

"I know."

"There's a similar case every other month. So, I hope you know where I'm coming from. As much as I want to... Continue what happened on friday, I can't. It's a risk that I just cannot take. I hope you understand. I'm sorry if I led you on," Lorenzo finished.

Kingsley stared wordlessly at his boss. This was exactly what he wanted to talk to Lorenzo about, and if anything then Lorenzo saved him from the tough part. So why? Why was Kingsley feeling disappointed and not relieved?

What was he hoping for? That Lorenzo would tell him that he's worth ruining his career for? He had to remind himself that this was real life. Which had real consequences, and very rare happy endings.

"I should go," Kingsley said, getting up from the couch.

"But the dinner isn't here yet and—" Lorenzo stood up as well, walking towards Kingsley. He grabbed hold of his employee's arm, stopping him in his place.

"It's fine, um, I'm not really that hungry," Kingsley replied.

"Reece," Lorenzo frowned, "I really don't want this to come between us. I'd still like to not only maintain a professional relationship with you, but also be *friends.* "

"Yeah, don't worry. That's not going to change," Kingsley said.

"Please stay for dinner."

"Lorenzo..."

"Please?" Lorenzo repeated. Kingsley looked down to where Lorenzo was holding his arm, the skin already feeling hot.

"Okay," Kingsley said softly, "can I use the restroom?"

"Go from there," Lorenzo pointed in the direction, "second door to the left."

"Thanks," Kingsley muttered.

Kingsley closed the washroom door behind him, and then leant back, resting his head as he closed his eyes shut and took a deep breath in.

"You're a terrible person," Kingsley muttered to himself after he opened his eyes again and looked at himself straight in the mirror, "and stupid, so goddamn stupid."

Kingsley got exactly what he wanted, or what he thought he wanted. But the heavy weight he felt in his chest suggested otherwise. After taking another couple minutes to cool down, Kingsley finally left the restroom and went back to where Lorenzo was.

The dinner had arrived while he was gone, and Lorenzo was already setting it up on the table. Kingsley asked if he could help, but Lorenzo just ordered

him to sit down.

Dinner was *tense* .

Neither of them knew what to talk about, so they just ate in silence. Once they were done eating, Kingsley just wanted to run out of the apartment, but that's not what Lorenzo had in mind. He asked Kingsley to stay for one last drink, and the other man agreed.

They were in Lorenzo's balcony, looking over at the city lights. Kingsley's view from his penthouse was better, but this was still breathtaking nonetheless.

"I used to deliver pizza when I was sixteen," Lorenzo said, "I remember this one customer, some rich college kid who was having a party and he told me to keep the pizza in the kitchen and I kind of got lost in the apartment. I saw this city from one of the windows and I just thought... Damn I need to have this view someday."

"You worked for it and you achieved it," Kingsley stated.

"I did, but nothing in life is certain. It's very easy to fall when you're at the top," Lorenzo replied.

"I get it, and I agree with your decision," Kingsley paused, "about us."

Lorenzo didn't say anything, making Kingsley gulp as he stared at his boss. He couldn't help but look at his lips, remembering that they hadn't even kissed on Friday. It was a bummer that they were going to stop, and Kingsley couldn't even get a proper taste of Lorenzo. Never in his life had he regretted not kissing someone so much. If only he had another chance...

"Friday shouldn't have happened," Lorenzo muttered.

"You regret it?" Kingsley asked, furrowing his brows.

"No! No, that's not what I meant," Lorenzo sighed, "what I'm trying to say is that... The situation just isn't ideal. I'm your boss. Sleeping with employees is not the precedent that I should set."

"Maybe you should live a little," Kingsley muttered. Lorenzo's statement annoyed him. He hated the word *regret* with a burning passion.

"Excuse me?"

"You're always so uptight, it wouldn't hurt to let it loose sometimes," Kingsley looked away from Lorenzo, no longer wanting to meet his eyes.

"How do you suggest I do that?" Lorenzo asked.

Kingsley turned to face his boss again, as he ran his eyes up and down his body. Kingsley smirked as his gaze fell on Lorenzo's crotch, it was clear what both of them wanted. *Crystal* clear from the way he could see Lorenzo's dick print on his sweatpants. He was starting to get hard.

Logic and rationality had long left Kingsley's mind, and he didn't think twice before answering the question.

"No one has to know what happens behind closed doors."

***

at this point, y'all should be used to cliffhangers from me.

chapter 20 is up on patreon and buymeacoffee! links in bio.

Chapter Sixteen

Kingsley felt like his head was spinning.

He walked back home after that last drink with Lorenzo, which he didn't even finish. He had basically thrown himself at the man, giving him an open invitation to fuck him. And what did Lorenzo say to that?

'It's getting late, I think you should head home now, Mr. Kingsley.'

Kingsley knew he couldn't trust himself to be alone at that moment. He was going to end up drinking a whole bottle and then do something he'd most likely regret in the morning. So, he called the one person he trusted to keep him in check.

"Come over. Bring Kai too," Kingsley said as soon as Roan picked up the call.

"I just got back from work and I'm tired. I'll see you tomorrow," Roan replied.

"If you come over then I'll let you borrow my car whenever you want. For the next three months," Kingsley offered.

He knew if he just told Roan he wanted a friend, the blond would come over in an instant. But that just wasn't Kingsley's style. He also knew about Roan's obsession with cars, and that he loved Kingsley's Rolls Royce.

"You evil, evil man. We'll be there in thirty," Roan said before hanging up.

Kingsley poured himself a drink as he waited for his friends to show up. They were late, and finally after about an hour, the doorbell rang. Kingsley opened the door and let the two in. There was a bright glow on Kai's face, and a cheeky smirk on Roan's. Kingsley knew what it meant.

"I know I said you can borrow my car whenever, but if I find any stains in the backseat then you're buying me a new one," Kingsley said.

"Sure, I'll just sell my kidney and whatever other organs I can spare," Roan replied.

"All except one," Kai winked at his husband, causing Kingsley to nearly gag.

"Not in my house, please, leave your lovey dovey bullshit at the door." Kingsley groaned as the three entered the massive living room.

"Sorry," Kai grinned, "but not sorry."

"Disgusting," Kingsley muttered, making the two laugh. They knew he meant well.

"So, this was short notice," Roan said.

"Can't a guy wish to hang out with his friends?" Kingsley rose a brow, "besides, I didn't want to drink alone."

"Since when do you care about drinking alone?" Roan asked. He was always perceptive of things, so Kingsley wasn't surprised he caught on to the fact that the dark haired man had an ulterior motive.

"Fine," Kingsley sighed, "I may or may not want to vent about something..."

"Let me make us all a drink first."

Roan did exactly that. Kingsley drank the entire thing in a single go, before starting on with his rant. He told the two husbands everything that went down with him and Lorenzo, since the start. Keeping it all in was troubling him ever more, and he sighed in relief once he was done narrating the events.

"Wow."

"Okay, again, how many million did you spend just so Lorenzo would get to keep his job?" Kai asked, clearly in shock.

"That's not the point," Kingsley said, "and I didn't do it for him. I told you, I just didn't want some old bald guy bossing me around. I did it for me."

"Yeah, keep telling yourself that," Kai scoffed.

"What do you want?" Roan asked.

"What do you mean?" Kingsley was confused.

"You said Lorenzo doesn't want to fuck you because he's your boss and this could kill his career. But what do you want? Kinda sounds like you like him. More than just in a sexual way," Roan explained.

"Oh, fuck no!" Kingsley let out a dry laugh, "I don't have feelings for him. I don't do that shit and you know it."

"Sometimes you just can't control who you like," Kai shrugged.

"It's not the *who* that's the issue, but... Just this feelings bullshit in general," Kingsley said, "besides, even if I liked him then it wouldn't matter. If he's too professional to fuck me then he's obviously not going to be in a relationship with me."

"You don't know that," Roan said, "maybe you should just try talking to him instead of seducing him every chance you get."

"Try talking to him about what? I just told you I don't have feelings for him," Kingsley was stubborn.

"Then why is this bothering you so much?" Roan retorted.

"Because... I... I don't know," Kingsley said the last part softly, "this hasn't happened to me since Cole."

"Kingsley..."

"I mean, I've never even wanted round two with any of the guys I've fucked. And I don't just mean one night stand strangers, but even the friends that I've fucked. Remember Nathan from your college? Fucked him. No urge for round two. Same for everyone else."

"Wait, you fucked Nathan? I thought he was straight," Roan blinked, "and low-key homophobic."

"Don't underestimate my charm," Kingsley shrugged.

"Okay, back to the topic, I've got to agree with Ro here, sounds like you have feelings for Lorenzo," Kai said.

"You both are delusional."

"Yeah right, *we* are the delusional ones," Roan scoffed.

"Look, I didn't call you both here for advice. I just want to hangout stress free with my friends," Kingsley said.

"Fine. Bring out the tequila."

Kingsley put on some music, and brought out a bottle of tequila. Drinking on a Monday night when you have work the next day wasn't ideal, but it was too late to stop now. If anything, he had his boss to blame.

"I have a question," Roan looked thoughtful, "why didn't you tell Lorenzo that you want to invest in his company. You could've just been like 'hey, I have a few million in my piggy bank, why don't I sign you a cheque?"

"Yeah, you're rich. Big deal. Why have you been hiding it?" Kai asked.

"It's kind of stupid," Kingsley muttered.

"Come on."

"You know how in school and college everyone wanted to be my friend?"

"And you always told them to fuck off because you can't deal with gold diggers," Roan nodded.

"You can't exactly tell a co-worker to fuck off," Kingsley sighed, "besides, when I joined there this was guy that was on his notice period. Evan or Eric or something. His mom owned a business and he was entitled and annoying as fuck. Always going on and on about how he bought a Rolex or his Armani suit and well, everyone hated him."

"Ah," Kai nodded understandingly.

"Yeah, I was hired to replace him, so while he was handing me off his work, man, he was just such an ass. Everyone in the office hated him and was glad he was going. So, you know, I didn't want to be him. Besides, it never really came up. What was I supposed to do? Randomly go up to my co-workers and tell them my mother has an Oscar?"

"Your mother has—" Kai paused, "can we exchange lives?"

"If we exchange lives then I'll be married to Ro," Kingsley smirked, "let's freaky friday this shit."

"Alright so I get a penthouse in NYC, a Rolls Royce and millions of dollars," Kai hummed, "but I lose an inch of my height and Roan."

"Hey, you're not taller than me, your curly hair just has more volume which makes you—"

"Nah, don't care about Ro or anything but my height is too important to me. Deal's off," Kai said.

"I feel so loved right now," Roan deadpanned, making his husband laugh.

"Oops."

The two husbands stayed for another hour or so, until they had successfully distracted Kingsley. Once Kingsley was on the verge of passing out, Roan booked a cab for him and Kai to head back home.

Kingsley stumbled into his bedroom, not even bothering to change his clothes as he plopped on the bed. He stared at the ceiling, as the events of the night replayed in his head.

"No one has to know what happens behind closed doors," Kingsley said. Lorenzo looked taken aback, as if he wasn't expecting the man to be so open about what he wanted.

"What are you saying?" Lorenzo asked.

"You know what I'm saying, I just don't get why we're playing around like this," Kingsley sighed, "we both want to fuck each other. There's no one here but us. Why don't we just get it over with?"

"You're a bold man," Lorenzo muttered, chuckling as he took a sip of his drink.

"I don't like to beat around the bush."

"I could lose my company over this," Lorenzo stated.

"No one has to know, Enzo," Kingsley assured.

"It's getting late, I think you should head home now, Mr. Kingsley."

***

Chapter 21 is now up on patreon!!

I've read some comments about confusion regarding the ages of all the characters in the series, so here's the clarification— Tense: they're all 18/19

King's Guard: Kingsley, Kai and Roan are 23/24

Delicate: Leo is 19, Milan is 18, Kai and Roan are in their early thirties

Chapter Seventeen

Lorenzo was starting to join the employees more often whenever they invited him out. Currently, he was with Anwar, Miles, Nina and a couple other colleagues at a club. Oh, and Kingsley.

Kingsley wanted a nice night out. Away from Lorenzo and the ever growing tension between them. That was why he floated the idea of going out partying on Friday night to Anwar. What he did not expect was Anwar asking Lorenzo, and the boss actually agreeing.

They both had been ignoring each other like the plague ever since that night at Lorenzo's. They only spoke when it was work related, it was as if they had gone back in time. Back to when they were just co-workers, and Kingsley spent his free time fantasizing about fucking him.

To say that Kingsley's mood had turned sour the moment he realised Lorenzo would be joining him, would be an understatement. They were all sitting around a round table in the bar, with beers flowing as everyone talked about some thing or the other.

Lorenzo was talking to Jiya, and Kingsley was wallowing in silence. He didn't know why he was acting like this. He asked Lorenzo to fuck him. Lorenzo said no. Big deal. Sure, rejections hurts. But that's not what Kingsley was mad about. The cause behind his sullen mood was the *reason* why he couldn't be with Lorenzo.

They were two consenting adults, but the office management wouldn't see it that way. They would see an executive taking advantage of his subordinate — and if they were caught, then Lorenzo would lose everything.

So, Kingsley wasn't mad at Lorenzo. But at the situation they were in.

Though he did expect Lorenzo to reach out to him, which he didn't. So, Kingsley may or may not have been a bit salty about that. He knew he was being an attention whore, but he didn't couldn't care less.

"I'm going to get something stronger," Kingsley muttered to Anwar.

He got up from his chair and went over to the bar counter, before sitting down on a stool. He asked the bartender for a whiskey, as he stared aimlessly at the wall.

"Kingsley?" A voice interrupted Kingsley's attempt at getting some peace.

Kingsley turned towards the face behind the voice. He furrowed his brows, when he realised it was Nathan. Nathan was someone Kingsley met years ago through Roan

During their first meet, Nathan was basically a sexist and homophobic asshole. During their second meet, Kingsley fucked him in the restroom stall of a club. It had been years since he last saw him, and even though he was a jerk, he was at least a good looking jerk.

"Nathan," Kingsley finally said, "long time."

"Yeah, like four years I think." Nathan took that as a welcome to sit down, and sat on the barstool next to Kingsley. "Are you here alone?"

"Nah, I'm with my co-workers." Kingsley shook his head before motioning towards the table where the people from his office were seated.

"Yet you're sitting at the bar by yourself?" Nathan raised a questioning eyebrow.

"Just needed some space," Kingsley muttered.

"If that's the case then do you want to get out of here?" Nathan asked, a sly smile on his face. It was crystal clear what he wanted, and Kingsley couldn't help but chuckle.

"What? Are you gay now?" Kingsley asked. Nathan laughed, before shaking his head.

"Nah, if I'm honest with you then..." Nathan licked his lower lip before placing his hand on Kingsley's thigh, his thumb rubbing the clothed skin.

"You're the only guy I've been with. I've never really wanted to, you know, do it with another guy. But I do think about you from time to time."

"We had fun." Kingsley recalled. It was a good night, indeed.

He still remembered Nathan's moans as he pressed him against the wall, their jeans pooling at their ankles as he fucked him senseless in a place where everyone could hear them despite the barrier of a flimsy door.

"We did." Nathan nodded. "But it was rushed, so how about this time around we do it properly? We could take it back to my place."

Kingsley stared at Nathan's face, as the man watched him back with a hopeful expression. On any other day, Kingsley would've probably agreed. But for some reason, the thought of hooking up with someone felt...wrong.

Nathan was hot. The way Nathan was looking at Kingsley and touching his thigh was hotter. And Kingsley should've been aroused, but all he could think of was one particular man.

"Can I get a scotch?"

Kingsley recognised that voice. It was Lorenzo, standing right behind Kingsley. He turned to face his boss, and so did Nathan.

"Aren't you going to introduce me to your friend?" Lorenzo spoke up again.

"This is Nathan," Kingsley muttered. "And Nate, this is my boss, Lorenzo Salazar."

"Lorenzo Salazar?" Nathan's face lit up in recognition. "I read your Forbes 30 under 30 mention. It's amazing how much you've been able to achieve at a young age, I'm a huge fan!"

"Ah, thank you." Lorenzo gave Nathan a polite smile, but Kingsley could tell that it was forced. "Do you work in tech, Nathan?"

"Yeah, I do, I'm looking to switch companies though," Nathan answered.

"If you have a card then maybe I can contact you if we ever have any openings in the near future?" Lorenzo suggested.

"Of course! That'd be great." Nathan grinned as he gave his card to Lorenzo, who kept it in the front pocket of his suit jacket. Nathan turned to face Kingsley again. "Give me a call if you ever want to catch up. I'll see you later."

"Sure," Kingsley muttered. With that, Nathan left.

Lorenzo took Nathan's place, sitting down on the stool where he previously sat. Kingsley looked at him with a questioning gaze, but didn't say anything.

"So, is that your type?" Lorenzo asked.

"What?"

"Cute brunettes like Nathan. Is that the type of guys you like to fuck?" Lorenzo elaborated. "If I recall correctly, that man I saw you with a few months ago looked similar."

"Yeah, that's exactly my type." Kingsley looked at Lorenzo, directly in his eyes. "Cute brunettes that love to have me on top of them as I fuck them senseless."

"But is that the type of men that you prefer fucking you?"

"You're asking me my type in men that I'd bottom for?" Kingsley asked with a dry laugh, and Lorenzo gave him a nod. "Maybe you should buy a mirror."

"Is that so?" Lorenzo's voice was low, as he subconsciously shifted a little closer to Kingsley. He was watching him with such intensity, that Kingsley felt like he was going to melt.

"Didn't deny it before, not going to start denying it now," Kingsley answered.

Lorenzo didn't say anything, and kept staring at the other man. After a minute of the *tense* silence, he sighed and turned around to face the bar. He grabbed his glass, and gulped down the drink in a single go.

"This has never happened before," Lorenzo muttered.

"What?"

"I've never wanted someone so badly that I contemplated risking everything for them," Lorenzo answered. "You have no idea how much I wanted to pull away that...that other guy from you. How much I wish I could take you home and spend all night showing you how much I want you."

Kingsley was shocked frozen. This was the last thing he ever expected to hear from Lorenzo, that too so soon after the man basically kicked him out of his house.

"You were jealous?" That was all Kingsley could ask. Lorenzo let out a bitter laugh, as he motioned for the bartender to get him a refill.

"That's an understatement," Lorenzo replied.

"If it makes you feel any better then I wasn't going to fuck him," Kingsley admitted.

"You weren't?" Lorenzo asked, as he turned to face Kingsley once again. Kingsley nodded, and Lorenzo looked visibly relieved. "Why not?"

"Just not in the mood," Kingsley muttered.

He didn't want to tell Lorenzo that it just didn't feel right to be with anyone that wasn't him. Lorenzo seemed a little disappointed with the answer, but didn't say anything about it.

"Oh."

"What should we do?" Kingsley asked, he was tired of running in circles.

"What do you want to do?"

"Well, I say we fuck once and relieve all the built up tension. And then we can go back to how it was earlier." Kingsley shrugged, making Lorenzo chuckle. A real laugh this time.

"Jesus, you're blunt," Lorenzo said. "You think one fuck will end all this...whatever this is?"

"Isn't that how it works?"

"I wouldn't know," Lorenzo said. "I'm not really the one night stand sort of guy."

"Well, I am. And trust me, it's the best way to relieve stress," Kingsley replied.

"I see."

"Look, Lorenzo," Kingsley sighed, "I don't do games. I don't do feelings or relationships. I like keeping things simple, and I like sex. And I like the idea of sex with you even more. But I'm getting sick of this...whatever this is."

"Reece—"

"You can't kick me out of your place one day and then tell me that seeing me talking to some other guy was making you jealous the next. You can't...say that you want me but not do anything about it." Kingsley paused. "So, I'm asking you for the last time. Do you want to fuck me tonight or not? If not, then we never talk about this again. No flirting or teasing or any of that bullshit. We go back to being strictly colleagues or friends or whatever."

"Wow."

"It's your call." Kingsley was done.

"We're going to go back to our table now," Lorenzo said. Kingsley sighed, this was it. He was never going to think of Lorenzo as more than his boss ever again. This was his last chance. But then the man continued. "In five minutes, I'm going to take my leave. Ten minutes after that, you're going to

make an excuse to leave too. My driver is here. I'll meet you outside in my car."

"Are you sure about this?" Kingsley was shocked. Pleasantly so.

"I'm certain."

"I'll see you in fifteen then, sir."

***

chapter 22 is now up on patreon and buymeacoffee! links in bio.

I was actually pleasantly surprised to see many of you actually remember who Nathan was (considering he was barely even a side character)

Chapter Eighteen

There was nothing else to look at, except Lorenzo. Lorenzo was leaning against the elevator wall, his eyes focused on the other man. Kingsley was standing in front of him, at the other end with a good few feet between them.

The way Lorenzo was looking at Kingsley reminded him of that night in the office. The same hunger was back, and Kingsley knew the only thing stopping them from already tearing apart each other's clothes was the camera in the elevator.

Kingsley had plenty of experience in bed. It was an area where he had always been confident in. But he had never felt this amount of anxiety before in his life. Something, no, everything about Lorenzo made his insides feel weird. This couldn't be the butterflies people talked about, could it?

The elevator dinged as they reached Lorenzo's floor. The boss finally looked away, but grabbed Kingsley's hand as they walked out. He didn't let go of his hand until they were in front of his apartment, and he had to take out his keys to unlock the door.

The next few seconds felt like a blur, as Kingsley was pressed against the wall with Lorenzo's lips on his neck and their bulges grinding against one another's.

Kingsley closed his eyes shut, wanting to give in to how it felt having Lorenzo so close to him. He didn't understand this feeling, never in his life had he wanted to just lay back down and receive everything that was being given to him.

"Are you okay?" Lorenzo asked. He was looking into Kingsley's eyes, slight concern visible on his face.

"Yeah," Kingsley replied softly.

"You haven't said a word since we got here," Lorenzo pointed out. "Do you... Do you still want this?"

"I..." Kingsley paused. He stared back at Lorenzo, at the soft look on his face, as if the man actually cared about Kingsley and that this wasn't just a one night stand. "I want you."

"Yeah?" Lorenzo rested his forehead on Kinsgley's as he whispered. "I want you too. So goddamn much."

"I can feel that," Kingsley replied. He grounded harder against Lorenzo, as if telling him what he meant by that.

"Do you?" Lorenzo asked. He held Kingsley's hand, and brought it to his crotch to grab his clothes erection. "Do you feel how hard I am for you?"

"Maybe," Kingsley smirked. "Though I think I require a much clearer view in order to make sure I'm right, *sir* ."

And that was how Kingsley ended up on his knees. Lorenzo's pants were pooled up around his ankles, and the two hadn't even moved from the entrance of his apartment.

Lorenzo's eyes were closed as he leant his head back on the wall. His hand was tangled up in Kingsley's hair as he guided his movements. Soft groans escaped his lips every few seconds, and Kingsley was loving it. He loved the feeling of Lorenzo in his mouth, making him feel good and hearing the pleasure in the sounds he was making.

Lorenzo removed his hand from Kingsley's head, and Kingsley immediately missed the sensation of him tugging on his hair as he fucked his mouth.

Kingsley turned his head slightly to look up, only to see that Lorenzo was already looking down at him. His eyes were hooded with lust, as he unbuttoned his shirt slowly.

"Get up," Lorenzo ordered. Kingsley obeyed.

Lorenzo started unbuttoning Kingsley's shirt, as he stared right into his eyes. Lorenzo was impatient, as he fumbled on the last button. He muttered a 'fuck it', before tearing it and ripping the button off. Kingsley couldn't help but let out a small chuckle, good thing he bought the shirt on sale.

Soon enough Kingsley was stark naked, and pressed against the wall yet again. But this time his back was facing Lorenzo, as his boss pressed chaste kisses on his shoulder blades before moving down. Kingsley's hands were on the wall, desperation attempting to hold on as he felt the familiar wet sensation.

Lorenzo gripped the sides of Kingsley's hips, pulling his ass closer to his face as he tongue penetrated the other man's hole. He moved a hand to stroke Kingsley's dick, as he continued rimming him. Kingsley bit down on his lower lip, his breathing heavy as he turned around to look at a busy Lorenzo.

Lorenzo removed his shirt from his shoulders as he stood up. He rubbed his erection against Kinsgley's ass, pressing it between his crack as he teased him. His hands were running up and down Kingsley's chest before settling on his pecs to rub the hardened buds.

"As much as I would love to fuck you against this wall, I think it's time we move to the bedroom," Lorenzo whispered in Kingsley's ear.

Once in Lorenzo's bed, Kingsley was on all fours as his boss prepared him. Kingsley was trying hard to relax, it had been a while since he had been on the receiving end. As if sensing that Kingsley was nervous, Lorenzo removed his fingers from inside the man and asked him to lay down on his back.

"We can sto—"

"No." Kingsley interrupted before Lorenzo could finish his sentence.

"But you..."

"I, uh, I usually am the top so this is just a bit foreign," Kingsley explained.

"Oh." Lorenzo seemed a little unsure as he continued. "Do you...do you want to top tonight?"

"You'd let me fuck you?" Kingsley was taken aback.

"If I can expect you to let me fuck you then I should be willing to take it as well," Lorenzo said as if it was the most usual thing in the world.

"I...I will take you up on that some other time," Kingsley answered. "Tonight I want you to fuck me harder than anyone ever has."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely," Kingsley answered with a nod. All of a sudden, he felt his worries dissipate. He wanted Lorenzo inside him, he wanted him to fuck him into oblivion.

After wearing a condom and using a lot of lube, Lorenzo positioned himself on top of Kingsley. Kingsley wrapped both his legs around Lorenzo's waist as the man pushed in slowly. Kingsley hissed at the pain, but urged Lorenzo to keep going. He went in inch by inch, and Kingsley let out a sigh of relief as he adjusted to the size.

Apart from a couple of occasions, Kingsley had never enjoyed bottoming all that much. But as Lorenzo thrusted inside him, he started questioning why that was. His nails were digging into Lorenzo's back as he started moving faster.

"So goddamn tight..." Lorenzo groaned.

"I thought you wanted me bad? Why don't you start fucking me like you mean it then?"

Lorenzo narrowed his eyes slightly, a fire in them that Kingsley had never seen before. Within the next few seconds, Kingsley's face was pressed against the pillow, he was on his knees with his ass arched up as Lorenzo pounded him from behind.

Lorenzo's fingers trailed up Kingsley's back as he wrapped his hand around his neck, pushing his face deeper into the bed as he thrusted in with long and hard strokes. Lorenzo's other hand was gripping Kingsley's ass, alternating between squeezing the soft flesh and landing hard slaps on them. Kingsley moaned louder with each hit, his fingers clenching onto the sheets as his body started to feel like jelly.

He was loving it. He was loving not having control as Lorenzo fucked him, not slowing down at all.

Lorenzo pulled out, and Kingsley almost whined at the lose of feeling the other man in him. He wanted that feeling again, of being so full and so connected.

Lorenzo grabbed Kingsley's waist, pulling him to the edge of the bed. Kingsley's legs were resting on his boss's shoulders as Lorenzo went inside him again in a single go. Lorenzo started stroking Kingsley's dick, his pace matching that of his hips as he pounded into him.

Kingsley was so lost in how good he was feeling that he didn't even warn Lorenzo before cumming all over his hand and his own abdomen. Lorenzo rubbed the slit of Kingsley's dick with his thumb, and Kingsley let out a shiver because of how sensitive he felt there.

Lorenzo brought his hand to his lips, tasting Kingsley's cum as their eyes met again. That made Kingsley's cock start to get hard again. Lorenzo finally broke eye contact, he shut his eyes as his lips slightly parted. His thrusts got faster and sloppier, and Kingsley knew he was about to orgasm too. Which he did right at that moment.

Lorenzo pulled out, he removed the condom before tying a knot and throwing it in the bin. Kingsley was still on the bed, his legs dangling off the edge as he tried to catch his breath. Lorenzo made a quick trip to the bathroom to grab a wet towel. He helped Kingsley clean up, before getting him a pair of clean sweatpants to wear.

Kingsley looked at the piece of clothing in confusion. He was expecting Lorenzo to ask him to leave, directly or indirectly so. But lending him

sweatpants was a clear indication that he wanted the other man to stay the night.

"What are these for?" Kingsley asked, puzzled.

"You're going to sleep naked?" Lorenzo questioned back. "I don't mind but..."

"Oh," Kingsley blinked, "thanks."

"Okay, um so—"

"Actually," Kingsley finally stood up as he spoke, "I think I'll leave now."

"It's quite late—"

"I'll call a cab," Kingsley interrupted.

There was a good chance Lorenzo would regret sleeping with an employee the next morning. And Kingsley didn't want to be present to witness that. Morning afters were always awkward in his opinion, and there was no way in hell he would be okay if he got to see Lorenzo panicking over what went down.

The best thing to do was to leave, in Kingsley's opinion. Lorenzo seemed dejected at the idea, but nodded nonetheless. Lorenzo walked him to the door, where Kingsley grabbed his clothes and quickly dressed up. He let out another chuckle at the missing button of his shirt.

Kingsley turned to face his boss, not knowing what to say or do. Was he supposed to kiss him bye? No. The two hadn't even kissed, now that he thought of it. A handshake, maybe?

"I'll see you at work," Kingsley muttered before turning around to leave.

"Reece," Lorenzo stopped him.

"Yeah?"

"I—" Lorenzo paused. He looked at Kingsley with a slight frown, before sighing. "Nothing. Have a good night."

"You too."

***

chapter 23 is up on patreon and buymeacoffee! links in bio.

also, I've published the first chapter of my new book 'In Another Era'! do check it out, and I'll be to hear any feedback/critique!

Chapter Nineteen

"Leg day? Fuck no," Kingsley scoffed.

"Coward," Roan muttered.

"You should join the gym near my building, it's got—"

"Neither am I going to pay that much for a gym membership nor am I going to drive 20 minutes to go work out." Roan interrupted.

Kingsley didn't regularly go to the gym, unlike Roan. But today he was feeling a little extra skip in his step, so he decided to accompany his friend. Also, he didn't feel like being alone.

"I thought after last week's workout you said you wouldn't step foot in a gym ever again?" Roan recalled.

"I'm just here for eye candy," Kingsley shrugged as he looked around the area.

"If you're looking then I might be able to hook you up with someone," Roan said.

"Who?" Kingsley asked. Roan subtly motioned towards a brunette on the treadmill. Kingsley hummed, giving the man a once over, he was just his type. "How do you know he's gay?"

"I'm pretty sure he tried to ask me out last week in the locker room," Roan answered.

"What did you do?"

"I take off my ring before working out, so just as he was getting to it I slid it back on," Roan shrugged. Kingsley laughed, shaking his head at his best friend.

Kingsley mostly lounged around the gym as Roan worked out. Once he was done, they went to the locker room to get changed. Kingsley had basically been following around Roan like a puppy, and the other man was finally begin to suspect that something was up.

"So, are you going to tell me what happened or not?" Roan sighed as he looked at Kingsley tiredly.

"What?" Kingsley played dumb.

"You're hanging out with me at the gym on a Saturday, instead of watching Netflix in your bed and eating pizza. That means there's something you want to talk to me about. There's a weird... glow on your face which means you had sex. And you winced when you sat down so that means you got fucked," Roan hummed in deep thought.

"How the fuck—"

"A random one night stand wouldn't have been anything special. That means it wasn't some stranger at a bar," Roan paused. "You fucked your boss!"

"Well," Kingsley blinked, looking rather impressed at his best friend's deduction skills. "He fucked me. But yeah."

"Damn," Roan whistled. "Called it."

"Why the fuck do you work in finance? You should be like a detective or some shit," Kingsley said.

"Detective? Nah. Maybe a private investigator. I could find out whose husband is cheating with whom," Roan smirked. "So, how was it? Finally get it out of your system?"

"One of the best nights of my life," Kingsley muttered.

"I thought he said he's not gonna fuck his employee? What changed?"

"Guess I'm just too hot," Kingsley winked. Roan gave Kingsley a flat, unimpressed look in return.

"Excited for Monday and pretending that nothing happened between you both in the office?" Roan teased.

"Absolutely not. Since..." Kingsley paused, a frown on his face. "I think he wanted me to stay the night. But I left."

"Why the fuck would you leave?"

"Because... because sex is one thing but staying the night? That's like four steps more serious! I'm not ready for that. Also, I'm sure it was a one time thing, so what would've been the point? And can you imagine how awkward the next morning would've been had I stayed?" Kingsley groaned in frustration.

"This man has really got your knickers in a twist," Roan noted.

"Knickers? The fuck are you? British?" Kingsley rolled his eyes. "I have a question."

"Shoot."

"Have you ever hooked up with anybody and not... kissed them? Like on the lips?" Kingsley asked.

"I... I can't exactly recall but I don't think so," Roan answered.

"He hasn't kissed me yet," Kingsley sighed. "We've technically hooked up twice but he hasn't kissed me. How fucking weird is that?"

"Well, kissing is very intimate for some people..."

"More intimate than shoving their dick up my ass?" Kingsley deadpanned.

Roan was about to answer when someone coughed, interrupting the two of them. Both the men turned to their side to see a random guy in front of his

locker, looking rather embarrassed and disgusted as he couldn't help but overhear their conversation.

He turned to give them a curt look, and Kingsley scoffed as he rolled his eyes and got off from the metal bench that he was sitting on.

"You got a problem?" Kingsley rose a brow. Roan sighed as he folded his arms in front of his chest, only Kingsley would openly threat a man twice his size.

"Can you both do this elsewhere? This is not what I want to hear in a locker room of all places," the stranger replied.

"Then mind your own fucking business and stop eavesdropping?" Kingsley retorted.

"Not my fault I can't help but overhear two fa—"

"Say that word and I swear you'll be on the ground before you can even finish your sentence," Roan stepped in.

"Yeah, what were you going to say, Paul?" A fourth voice interrupted. It was Jax, the owner of the gym. "Can I talk to you in my office about your membership?"

Paul muttered a 'whatever' before walking out of the locker room. Jax turned to face the other two man, giving them an apologetic look.

"Sorry about that, fellas. I'll be revoking his membership," Jax said. "Y'all continue on."

With that Jax left, but Roan and Kingsley were no longer in the mood to talk about it. The two left and went their separate ways. Kingsley had been out pretty much his whole life, he was never actually in the closet to begin with. So, it was safe to say he had his fair share of dealing with homophobes.

Kingsley knew he had no patience and a really big mouth, so it had gotten him into trouble quite a few times. But luckily he was usually always with

Roan and Kai, two former football players with decent builds. The one time he wasn't... Good thing his father was able to make sure the charges didn't stay on his record.

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Lorenzo wasn't there for the Monday meeting. It was the first time that Kingsley could recall him not being there. Jiya, who was often Lorenzo's right hand, led the meeting. Once again, Kingsley couldn't concentrate, though this time it was because of the lack of his usual source of distraction.

Oh, the irony.

After the meeting, Kingsley went over to his desk and quietly started his work. Kingsley was previously worried that it might be awkward to be around his boss after last Friday. But Lorenzo still hadn't come into the office, and for some reason his absence was making Kingsley even more nervous.

When Lorenzo finally did come in, he wasn't alone. Kingsley furrowed his brows as he saw his boss walk in with a woman that he vaguely remembered. The two were immersed in their conversation, and walked straight into Lorenzo's office without paying mind to anyone else.

Kingsley tried to think hard about where he had seen that woman, and finally recalled that it was during that time he had dinner with his father.

Kingsley frowned, as he turned to face Nina. Who too, had noticed Lorenzo walk in with the mystery woman.

"Do you know who that is?" Kingsley asked.

"How would I know?" Nina scoffed, making Kingsley narrow his eyes at her.

"Because you know just about everything?"

"Oh come on, I don't—" Nina paused, "—never mind. Yeah, I know."
~~~

"So? Who is she?" Kingsley urged. He was desperate for the answer.

"His ex-wife." Nina revealed.

"Ex-wife?" Kingsley was taken aback. He didn't even know that Lorenzo was married, let alone divorced.

"Not many people know this but..." Nina lowered her voice as she continued. "Lorenzo got married right after high school. It didn't last long though, they separated just a few years later."

"How do you know this?" Kingsley questioned.

"I did my research when I was about to interview for my job," Nina answered, but Kingsley didn't buy it.

"Bullshit."

"Okay, *fine.* " Nina rolled her eyes. "Don't tell this to anyone, got it? Especially not Miles. But I had a huge crush on Lorenzo when I joined."

"You... had a crush on Lorenzo?" Kingsley couldn't help but smirk.

"Shut up," Nina groaned. "Have you seen the man? How can one not like him? But yeah, anyway, I wanted to know whether he was single or not so I did some digging. There wasn't much but he talked briefly about this in one old interview."

"So cute," Kingsley chuckled. He stopped when Nina have him a serious look. Kingsley could almost empathize, considering he had been lusting over their boss too. "How did you get over him?"

"After working with him for a few weeks I realised he would *never* be involved with an employee. So I moved on." Nina shrugged casually as she answered.

"Fair enough." Kingsley muttered as he turned around to face his laptop.

Kingsley remembered how angry Lorenzo had gotten when he thought Kingsley had a boyfriend and was cheating on him. That reassured Kingsley that his boss probably wasn't sleeping with him and seeing his ex-wife at the same time. But seeing them together, and knowing that they were once married made Kingsley shift uncomfortably in his chair.

This is none of my business, Kingsley thought to himself, *he can meet whoever he wants to meet.*

Kingsley started working on the rather strenuous report that he had, which helped slightly in taking his mind off of Lorenzo. But the weird feeling in his gut was still there. And Kingsley was forcing himself to believe that it wasn't jealousy.

As soon as Kingsley had finally stopped thinking about his boss, the man exited his office with his ex-wife next to him. Kingsley's eyes followed them as Lorenzo walked her out, and then re-entered after a minute. This time, Lorenzo looked at Kingsley, their eyes meeting briefly for a moment as he made his way to the office.

A couple minutes later, Kingsley's phone buzzed. He picked it up, and saw the notification on the lockscreen.

To : Kingsley | From : Lorenzo

Come over tonight?

****

chapter 24 is now up on patreon and buymeacoffee! links in bio.

Chapter Twenty

Kingsley inhaled deeply as he knocked on Lorenzo's door. He was in half a mind to not show up, but flashes of his night with Lorenzo played in front of his eyes whenever he closer them. The way Lorenzo made him feel... How he made his body feel— Kingsley just couldn't help but go back for more.

Lorenzo opened the door just a few seconds later, motioning Kingsley to come in before locking the door behind him. Lorenzo was still dressed in formal wear, he hadn't changed after coming back from the office. Kingsley's eyes immediately fell on the bottle of scotch that was on the living room table, with two glasses next to it.

Lorenzo poured Kingsley a drink, which the younger man easily accepted. The two sat down on the couch, and it wasn't hard to tell that Lorenzo was clearly struggling with something. Kingsley had assumed this was a booty call, but the more he looked at Lorenzo's troubled expression, the less he felt so.

"So, uh, sorry for getting straight to it but why did you invite me over?" Kingsley finally broke the silence.

"I wanted to talk to you about something," Lorenzo replied.

"That's never good," Kingsley muttered as he took a sip of his drink.

"I don't know if you're aware of this but... I used to be married. Years ago. The woman in my office today was my ex-wife," Lorenzo paused. "We hadn't spoken in years and then turns out she was one of the lawyers in the new law firm we hired a few months ago."

"It's a small world," Kingsley said.

"At first we decided we would keep it strictly business, but then we started meeting and hanging out for the sake of what we once had," Lorenzo

sighed. "She told me she wants to get back together. To try again."

"Oh," Kingsley blinked. "So, you're getting back with her and we can't fuck around anymore? Is that what you wanted to tell me?"

"No! No." Lorenzo shook his head. "I told her no."

"Why?" Kingsley furrowed his brows in confusion as he asked.

"I told her the truth," Lorenzo answered. "That in the last few years I've come to terms with my attraction towards men and that I don't think I can, or want to, be with a woman again."

"How did she take it?" Kingsley questioned. "Don't tell me she pulled the whole 'did I turn you gay' crap."

"No, she didn't." Lorenzo let out a dry chuckle. "She was quite understanding, actually. Shocked at first, of course. But she took it well, I think."

"That's great," Kingsley mumbled. "No offence but why did you want to talk to *me* about this?"

"I just didn't want you making any assumptions after seeing me with her in the office. Just in case you knew she was my ex-wife. I thought I'd clear it all up," Lorenzo said.

"Why would I make any assumptions?" Kingsley tilted his head slightly. "It's not like we're... dating or anything. We just had sex once."

Lorenzo was stunned as he stared at Kingsley. Kingsley bit his tongue, realising that he probably sounded a bit harsh. But it was the truth, nonetheless. They had only fucked once, and that didn't make them boyfriends. Kingsley didn't want Lorenzo thinking anything else.

"Right." Lorenzo nodded slowly. "I guess I overstepped my boundaries again."

"Lorenzo—" Kingsley lifted his arm to touch the other man, but pulled himself back as he sighed. "You've been honest with me, so I'll be honest with you too. I enjoy working with you. You're a great boss. And you're also great in bed. If you're okay with it then I want to continue both of these things. But... that's it. Work and sex. Nothing more."

"Wow." Lorenzo chuckled, Kingsley's bluntness never failed to surprise him. "You're one hell of a straightforward guy, Reece."

"Just one of my many amazing qualities. I'm good with my mouth, you know that," Kingsley smirked.

"Reece..." Lorenzo gently shook his head. "I think you should—"

"Get naked and bend over the couch?" Kingsley interrupted. "Or pull down your pants and get on my knees?"

Lorenzo's expression shifted as he stared at Kingsley with a familiar intensity. He didn't say a word, as he started unbuckling his pants.

Later that night, when they were done, Kingsley got up to get dressed and head home. Lorenzo watched him from the bed, still lying naked in all of his glory.

"You can stay the night, you know? It's quite late," Lorenzo spoke up.

"I have to go to work in the morning," Kingsley replied, pulling up his pants. "Of course, you know that."

"I can give you a ride to work," Lorenzo said.

"You want to show up together to work with me in the same clothes as the day before?" Kingsley rose a questioning eyebrow. "So much for keeping this a secret."

"I can give you a ride to your apartment in the morning before work," Lorenzo paused. "Or right now if you're in such a rush."

"That's fine," Kingsley waved him off dismissively. "I've already called a cab."

"You're in quite a hurry," Lorenzo noted.

"Oh, you know, I just need to make sure I get my beauty sleep," Kingsley shrugged, before pointing a finger to his face. "This doesn't just happen magically."

"I don't want to come between a man and his beauty sleep." Lorenzo raised his arms in defeat as Kingsley finished getting dressed up.

"You know we have to be really careful, right? It's your career on the line," Kingsley pointed out.

"I'm aware," Lorenzo nodded.

"Shouldn't be too hard. I don't think anybody suspects that you're anything but straight, and it's not like you can get me pregnant," Kingsley said.

Lorenzo didn't respond, and Kingsley could've noticed the pained expression on Lorenzo's face, but he was facing the other direction as he wore his shoes. Once he got up and turned around to face his boss again, Lorenzo was simply staring at Kingsley with a blank, unreadable look.

"See you at work tomorrow, boss," Kingsley said with a smirk, before walking out of Lorenzo's bedroom.

Over the course of the next few days, Kingsley started going to Lorenzo's apartment quite frequently. He never invited himself or went unannounced. It was always Lorenzo who would ask him to come over. The two had fallen into a pattern. Every other night, Lorenzo would text Kingsley to come over. Kingsley would go, they'd have sex, and then he'd leave.

Every single night, Lorenzo would try to get Kingsley to stay. Sometimes directly, sometimes not. But Kingsley was adamant on always going back home.

Kingsley was already breaking his rule of sleeping with the same man more than once. Lorenzo wasn't a one time fuck anymore, it was no longer the matter of simply 'getting it out of his system and fucking his boss'. It had turned into more, but as long as it was still just sex, Kingsley convinced himself that it was fine.

The two kept their hands off of each other in the office. Or well, at least they tried to.

Kingsley stared at Lorenzo's hands as the boss pointed towards the PowerPoint on the screen. He couldn't help but think about how that same hand was wrapped around his throat just a few hours ago. How it was pushing his face down as Lorenzo fucked him from behind.

Kingsley gulped, pulling himself out of that train of thought before he could get an erection at work in the middle of a meeting with the entire staff.

After the meeting, Kingsley headed to the restroom. To his surprise, Lorenzo was already in there, washing his hands as the younger man entered.

"Hey," Kingsley muttered.

"Hey?" Lorenzo asked with an amused look on his face, as if he knew that Kingsley was troubled. Or horny. Or both. Definitely both.

"Nice presentation. The quarterly reports are great and—"

"Reece?"

"Yeah?"

"Shut up," Lorenzo said.

Kingsley blinked in surprise, but didn't say anything. Lorenzo smirked, before grabbing Kingsley's hand and pulling him inside one of the stalls, and locking it. Kinsgley's eyes widened in surprise as Lorenzo started unbuckling Kingsley's pants, before pulling them down along with his underwear.

"What are you doing?" Kingsley whisper-yelled.

"Just celebrating the great quarterly reports," Lorenzo replied as he got on his knees and took Kingsley in his mouth in a single go.

"Fuck..." Kingsley breathed out as his hand flew to grip Lorenzo's hair.

Kingsley closed his eyes shut as Lorenzo bobbed his head. The thrill of doing it in the office was exhilarating. Kingsley was both nervous and more aroused than ever before. He bit down on his lower lip, even though there wasn't anyone else in the restroom, someone could very easily walk in so he couldn't risk being heard.

Kingsley's fear came true as the door to the restroom opened, and he heard footsteps. Kingsley looked down at Lorenzo, who was looking up at him as he continued sucking his dick. Kingsley expected him to stop, but he didn't.

"—I told Leah I was visiting an old friend in Boston. If she finds out I went to Vegas then she's going to lose her shit."

"You can't tell me that strip club wasn't worth lying to the wife for."

"Not gonna deny that."

Kingsley not only had to control his moans, but his laugh too as he overhead the conversation between two of his older colleagues. Within a couple of minutes, they were finally out of there.

Kingsley's tugged on Lorenzo's hair harder as he felt the familiar feeling in his gut.

Lorenzo didn't remove Kingsley's dick from his mouth until the man had stopped cumming. Lorenzo looked up, wiping his lips with the back of his palm as he swallowed every drop.

Kingsley leaned back against the wall, feeling exhausted as he tried to catch his breath. Lorenzo winked at him as he got and walked out of the stall. Kingsley didn't move from his place as he heard the water run in the sink outside. Once Lorenzo was done washing his hands, he left.

Kingsley finally pulled up his pants, unable to believe that his boss just gave him a blowjob in the restroom in the middle of a Tuesday.

And that Gary lied to his wife about going to a strip club.

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chapter 25 is now up on patreon! link in bio.

in other note, I made an Instagram account! my username is karaflynnofficial, so follow for general updates!

Chapter Twenty One

Kingsley was probably one of the very few people that liked sucking dick more than he liked getting his own dick sucked. It wasn't just the feel of someone's manhood in his mouth that he liked, but the sense of power it gave him. He loved watching the man, or men, that he was with shiver in pleasure.

He loved eye contact. He loved watching, and he loved being watched with lust filled and hooded eyes as he drove the person to release. Kingsley had a pattern, a routine of moves when he had his one night stands. Sucking the guy he was with to the edge, as he fingered him simultaneously was a part of it.

After his act of multitasking, when he knew the person was near— he'd stop.

And then Kingsley would turn him around, protect himself with rubber before using a generous amount of lube, and then thrust in. He was good at recognising who wanted it slow, who wanted it rough, and who wanted it just the right mix of both. And he'd keep doing that till the guy would grip the sheets, or hold the edge of the table, depending on where they were, and then cum everywhere.

Kingsley loved pleasuring others, he got off on it. Seeing his partner orgasm was usually enough to bring him closer to his climax too. He loved the occasional one night stands that would tell him to cum all over them. On their body, or on their face. They were his favourites.

But his fling with Lorenzo was nothing like what he was used to.

He wasn't used to being the one bent over a desk, hands gripping his ass, spreading his cheeks apart as a tongue penetrated him. He wasn't used to being the one begging for more. Or at least, wanting to beg for more. He

would never actually do it, he had way too much pride to beg, even sexually.

But if he had a dollar for each time he bit down his lip to stop himself from begging Lorenzo for more— Kingsley would be just a tad bit richer.

"Don't you think we should be a little more careful?" Kingsley asked as Lorenzo's hands worked to unzip the younger man's pants.

"It's almost six, there's no one in the office except us," Lorenzo reasoned.

"Still..." Kingsley inhaled deeply as Lorenzo gripped the base of his dick. "You know that Jim likes to get a headstart on cleaning the office some nights, right?"

"Do you want me to stop?" Lorenzo asked sincerely, making Kingsley chuckle.

"One of my heads say yes, but the other says no," Kingsley smirked. "I'm sure you can tell which one is saying what."

"I think I have a fair idea," Lorenzo replied with a cheeky smile as he slowly stroked Kingsley. "But you're right. This is risky."

"Very," Kingsley whispered.

The two were standing close, with Kingsley leaning against Lorenzo's desk. Lorenzo didn't say anything in return, as they stood frozen, staring into each other's eyes. Kingsley's gaze fell onto Lorenzo's lips. They still hadn't kissed each other, despite it being weeks since the first time they had sex.

Kingsley leaned forward slightly, just a quarter of an inch. But Lorenzo responded quick in backing away. Kingsley sighed, a wave of disappointment flowing through his system, but he didn't comment on it as he zipped his pants back up.

"Maybe we should take this back to my place?" Lorenzo asked.

"I have plans for tonight," Kingsley answered.

His friend Kai had finally gotten his teaching certification, so he was going out with Kai and Roan for a celebratory dinner.

"Oh yeah? A date?" Lorenzo questioned. Kingsley chuckled as he rose an eyebrow at his boss.

"Maybe. Would that be a problem?" Kingsley retorted.

"Nah, why wouldn't I love seeing the man I'm fucking go out on a date with someone else?" Lorenzo replied.

"You know," Kingsley paused, "for someone that's fucking me in secret—you're quite the jealous one."

"Reece..." Lorenzo's playful expression suddenly dropped, as he frowned slightly. "You know why I can't—"

"Hey, I was just kidding," Kingsley interrupted. His face mirrored Lorenzo's, as he took a step closer to him. He kept a hand on the other man's arm to reassure him. "I really don't care about staying behind closed doors."

"You don't?" Lorenzo furrowed his brows. "You mean you wouldn't prefer it if we could be out in the open?"

"Out in the open as...what?" Kingsley blinked in confusion.

"As—" Lorenzo paused, sighing as he shook his head, "—nevermind."

"Right," Kingsley said. "Nevermind, it is."

"I'll just head home, put on some sweats and order pizza then," Lorenzo changed the topic. "While thinking of you when I'm in bed alone."

"Well, I hope I satisfy you in your dreams tonight," Kingsley chuckled.

"You could also do that by coming over once you're done with your plans?" Lorenzo asked with a hopeful look.

"I... Lorenzo I'm not sure by when—"

"That's fine," Lorenzo cut him off, before shrugging. "It was worth a try."

"I'll see you at work tomorrow," Kingsley said.

"Tomorrow it is," Lorenzo nodded.

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"—what was the name of that douche bag from the basketball team that beat you up in senior year?" Kingsley chuckled as he recalled the fight Kai had gotten in back in high school at one of Kingsley's infamous parties.

"Hey, we don't talk about that time, okay?" Kai huffed.

"I still don't understand how three football players got beat up by a single basketball douche," Kingsley shrugged innocently.

"You've seen him! He was 6'7" and buff as hell!" Kai said in his defence.

"Didn't Ro here knock him out with a single punch?"

"I've got a mean right hook," Roan stated casually.

"Remind me not to get on your bad side," Kingsley said.

"You get on my bad side, then you get on my husband's bad side," Kai smirked. "And you're not looking very good right now."

Kingsley laughed, knowing that all of it was in good fun. After dinner, the three men decided to head over to a bar for some drinks. It was a classy place, the type that required a membership to enter and you couldn't get drunk without spending half your paycheck. But that wasn't a problem for Kingsley. He slammed his platinum card on the counter, announcing that the alcohol was on him tonight. Roan protested, but Kingsley told him to suck it.

"Aw, come on," Kingsley pouted slightly.
~~~

"Sorry dude," Roan replied. "Happy spouse, happy house."

"That's my man!" Kai grinned as he leaned to the side. Roan smiled softly at him as he pressed a kiss on his temple, making Kai subconsciously shift closer to his husband.

Kingsley watched the two with intensity. After years of third-wheeling, he was more than used to their public display of affection. It never bothered Kingsley, if anything, it gave the darkest parts of his heart some hope. Hope that maybe one day he would love someone the way these two loved eachother. And that that somebody would love him back the same.

Kingsley would never admit it, though. So he rolled his eyes, trying to come up with some snarky remark. But before he could do that, he was interrupted by a familiar voice.

Kingsley turned around to find his boss just a few feet away. He was calling for the bartender at the counter, and next to him was his ex-wife. Kingsley's stared at him with a blank expression, until Lorenzo felt eyes on him and turned towards the younger man. Lorenzo seemed taken aback at first, but he gave Kingsley a slight nod.

Kingsley's gaze shifted to Lorenzo's ex-wife, before he turned back to face his friends again.

"Isn't that Lorenzo?" Kai whispered, as he looked in his direction. "Do you know who that is with him?"

"His ex-wife," Kingsley muttered.

He knew Lorenzo was friends with his ex again. And he knew he denied getting back together with her. But Kingsley still couldn't help but dislike the sight of those two together.

"They're walking towards us," Kai stated.

Kingsley sighed, and waited till he felt a presence behind him before turning around. He passed a tight lipped smile, which looked rather forced,

and from the look on Lorenzo's face, he probably caught that.

"Reece," Lorenzo greeted. "Great to you see you here."

"Right back at you, boss," Kingsley bit his tongue. Lorenzo raised a questioning eyebrow, barely for a second. He then turned to face the two husbands.

"Lorenzo Salazar." He stated as he raised his hand forward for Roan to shake.

"Roan MacElroy," Roan replied with a rather stoic look on his face, sensing the tension.

"I'm Kai!" Kai said with a smile, as he waved at Lorenzo.

"This is a *friend* of mine, Audrey," Lorenzo said as he introduced his ex-wife, placing a hand on her lower back that didn't go unnoticed by Kingsley.

"Hello," Audrey finally spoke up. Her eyes lingered on Roan, who cleared his throat before purposefully scratching his temple to show off the wedding band on his ring finger. Audrey immediately looked away.

Kingsley didn't miss that either, and couldn't help but smirk at the exchange. It wasn't uncommon for Roan to get hit on whenever they went out. So, by now the man had come up with a lot of subtle ways to show that he was spoken for.

"Nice to finally meet you both. I've heard a lot of good things from Reece," Lorenzo said politely.

"Likewise, I—"

"We were just leaving, actually." Kingsley interrupted, glancing over at Kai. "You don't wanna be late for your job interview tomorrow morning, do you?"

"Uh," Kai blinked. "Yeah, right. My job interview, yes."

"Awesome." Kingsley nodded, before turning towards Lorenzo. "See you at the office tomorrow, sir."

"Can I speak to you for a moment, Reece?" Lorenzo frowned. "I never got the chance to discuss that report you sent today."

Kingsley seemed unsure, but nodded. The two men excused themselves, before walking to the corner of the bar, leaving behind two knowing men, and a very puzzled ex.

"What?" Kingsley asked.

"What's gotten into you?" Lorenzo asked. "You're not acting like yourself."

"I'm always myself, thank you." Kingsley retorted as he folded his arms in front of his chest.

"Are you jealous?" Lorenzo smirked, recalling the conversation they had earlier that evening in his office. "For someone that's just fucking me, you sure do get quite jealous."

"Why would I be jealous? You're fucking me, not her." Kingsley scoffed, before finally facing his boss. "...Right?"

"She really is just a friend." Lorenzo said softly as he kept his hand on Kingsley's arm. "You're the only one that I want."

"Do you want me bad enough to ditch your ex-wife and take me home with you?"

"You don't have to ask me twice," Lorenzo answered without wasting a second, "meet me outside in fifteen minutes."

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C **hapter 26 is now up on Patreon! Link in bio.**

Now that Delicate is almost over, I can't beleive King's Guard is the only book left in the Tense series.

Chapter Twenty Two

"What?" Kingsley asked as he picked up the call.

"Come over, I'm making lamb chops," replied Roan.

"I'll pass, I'm staying in tonight. I've made some kale juice, I'm going to detoxify and read a book," Kingsley said.

" *You mean you're going to eat pizza and drink beer while watching a trashy R rated movie, right?* " Roan retorted.

"Oh babe, you know me so well." Kingsley grinned. Kingsley lowered the volume of the show he was watching, afraid Roan would hear it.

"What are you— are you watching Real Housewives?" Roan asked.

"No..."

"You are, aren't you?"

"You don't get to judge me, okay? You and Kai have seen every single season of The Bachelor! That's not any better!" Kingsley defended himself.

"I'll see you at the gym tomorrow."

Roan hung up the call after that, Kingsley rolled his eyes as he kept his phone on the table in front of him before making himself comfortable on the couch.

Kingsley was having a good day. He had decided that he was going to relax the entire weekend. No work, no partying, no drama. He was going sit at home, order take-out, and watch random reality shows mindlessly in his boxers.

Kingsley was on his seventh episode of the day, when his phone rang. He raised his arm, trying to grab the phone from the table, but failed. He sighed, feeling lazy. Getting up seemed like too much effort, so he decided to ignore it. Whoever it was could wait.

He eventually fell asleep on the couch itself, and woke up around three hours later. He rubbed his eyes as he sat up straight, before finally grabbing his phone to check his notifications.

Kingsley almost dropped his phone in surprise when he saw that he had a missed call from his ex, Cole, and that he had left a voicemail.

Kingsley hadn't spoken to Cole in years. Cole had suggested staying friends after the break up, but Kingsley was too hurt, and definitely too petty for that. He loved Cole with all of his heart, and still did when Cole broke up with him, so being just friends was never an option for him.

Kingsley pressed his lips in a thin line as he contemplated between listening to the message or straightaway deleting it. He didn't want Cole back in his life, especially when he knew that the man was engaged to his ex best friend. He wanted that skeleton to remain in the closet.

Kingsley eventually decided to listen to the voicemail. He justified it by thinking that maybe it was some sort of emergency. Why else would Cole contact him after all these years?

"Hey, uh, Reece. I know we haven't spoken in years but...I'm in New York right now for a meeting and I was wondering if you wanted to meet? I'm flying back tomorrow morning but I get free tonight around 7. I'm staying at The Grand, if you, uh, if you'd like to meet then I'd be at the hotel bar at 8. I hope to see you, uh, bye."

Kingsley listened to the message again. And then again. Cole was in town and wanted to meet? There was no way Kingsley would do that. He looked at the clock, and it was already seven thirty.

Fuck, Kingsley thought to himself as he got up, *what's yet another idiotic decision?*

Kingsley didn't really have the time to take a bath, but he didn't want to show up looking like a mess so he quickly took a two minute shower. He dressed up in a black shirt and pants, and a black trench coat on top of it. He ruffled his hair to get the messy look, and unbuttoned the top three buttons.

Kingsley never tried this hard to look good, but he wanted Cole to see what he was missing out on. Kingsley was petty, immensely so, a trait he was too self aware to deny.

He called for a cab, and he was fifteen minutes late as he entered the hotel. His heart was beating faster than usual, he had imagined meeting or running into Cole for years now. He had always wondered what that would be like, whether old sparks would reignite or not. If Cole would apologise and say how much he regretted letting Kingsley go.

Kingsley stood at the entrance of the hotel bar, his eyes running around the massive room to find the person he was looking for. Finally, his gaze fell upon the familiar man.

Cole's light brown, almost blonde hair was cut short, unlike the longer length he had back in school. His expression was blank, as he sat on a bar stool and stared at his phone. Kingsley remembered how light-hearted Cole's laugh was, how he was always smiling. Unlike the varsity jacket he sported back in school, he was dressed in a neat suit. The earring in his left ear was gone too, and so were the feelings that Kingsley had for him once upon a time.

As Kingsley stared at him from a distance, he couldn't help but feel... nothing. He didn't love Cole anymore. He didn't care about talking to him, or getting an apology or some form of closure. The longer he stared, the more he realised that this was not the same person he once whole heartedly loved.

Of course, he grew up and he changed. And that made Kingsley realised that so did he. He wasn't the same person anymore either. But he had spent years trying desperately to hold onto his past. But the past was just that, it was long gone. And it was about time that Kingsley let go.

Kingsley shook his head lightly as he took a step back. He looked at Cole one last time, before turning around and walking towards the exit. Cole wasn't the person that Kingsley wanted to be with at that moment. That man was someone else, and before Kingsley knew it, he gave the cab driver his address.

Kingsley stood outside Lorenzo's door, hesitating to knock. There were still boundaries he had to respect, and showing up unannounced may or may not be a very bad idea. But Kingsley desperately wanted to see the man, so he pulled out his phone from his pocket and dialed Lorenzo's number.

"Hello?" Lorenzo answered.

"Hi." Kingsley inhaled deeply. "Are you free tonight?"

"Yeah, I'm just at home watching a movie," Lorenzo replied, making Kingsley breathe out in relief.

"Can I come over?" Kingsley asked.

"Sure. That would be very nice, actually," Lorenzo said.

"Cool. I'm outside your door."

" *Outsi— wait... like right now* ?" Lorenzo questioned.

"Uh," Kingsley let out a chuckle. "Would it seem weird if I say yeah?"

"Wait, I'm opening up."

Kingsley hung up the phone, as he waited outside. Within a few seconds, Lorenzo opened the door, looking at Kingsley with a surprised expression on his face. Kingsley gave him a lopsided grin, as he shrugged innocently. Lorenzo rose a questioning brow, but moved aside to let the younger man enter.

"Would you like a drink?" Lorenzo asked.

"No." Kingsley shook his head. "I want to stay sober tonight."

"I see," Lorenzo nodded. "Don't get me wrong, I'm happy to see you but... I'm a little confused too."

"It's kind of a long story," Kingsley replied.

"We have all night, don't we?"

"I— I went to see my ex," Kingsley admitted. "But I didn't really see him. I left before talking to him."

"Why?" Lorenzo asked as the two sat down on the couch. "Was it hard?"

"No. I mean, I always thought it'd be hard but I just... I just didn't care enough to go talk to him. Or listen to what he had to say. I thought I cared but after seeing him, I realised that I didn't," Kingsley said.

"And that's a good thing, right?"

"Very," Kingsley nodded. "I can let go now."

"Well, I don't know what went down with you both but I'm glad to hear this," Lorenzo said with a smile.

Lorenzo kept a hand on Kingsley's thigh, making the other man turn to face him. Kingsley's eyes raked in the view in front of him. Just a few weeks ago, he wouldn't have imagined that the man he had spent over a year dreaming about would ever actually be this close to him. But he was. And it was all so much better in reality than how he had pictured it in his head.

"I want to kiss you," Kingsley whispered. Lorenzo frowned slightly, as he stared back at him.

"Reece..." Lorenzo paused. "Kissing is just... it's just *more.* So much *more."*

"And what if I want more?"

"You do?" Lorenzo looked taken aback. "But you've always been so—"

"Lorenzo," Kingsley interrupted him softly. "I want you more than anything I've ever wanted before. I want all of you."

Lorenzo opened his mouth to speak, but he closed it almost immediately as Kingsley shifted closer towards him. Kingsley kept a hand on Lorenzo's cheek, as he leaned forward until their faces were just inches apart. But then he stopped. He wanted Lorenzo to make the final move, and Lorenzo knew it.

Kingsley's eyes left Lorenzo's as they slowly trailed down his face, focusing on his lips. Kingsley gently stroked Lorenzo's cheek, but refrained from going the full distance.

Lorenzo closed his eyes shut as he leaned forward, their lips finally connecting.

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Chapter 27 is now up on Patreon! Link in bio.

In another note, King's Guard is the only book left in the Tense series now! If you haven't, check out Tense and Delicate, both of which are now completed.

Chapter Twenty Three

A kiss. A simple kiss.

Kingsley never knew that just a single kiss could make me feel the way that he did. Soft lips pressed against his, the feel of Lorenzo's fingers in his hair, and his heart that seemed like it would beat right out of his chest. If he didn't know any better, he'd think he was having a cardiac arrest.

When they finally pulled apart, Kingsley's eyes stayed focused on Lorenzo's face. He was looking for any signs of distress or regret, though mentally hoping to find none. Lorenzo's lips were parted slightly, as he breathed a bit more heavily than usual. From the way his chest was moving up and down, it was clear that the kiss was just as exhilarating for him as it was for Kingsley.

Lorenzo closed his eyes before leaning forward again. He placed a soft, chaste kiss on Kingsley's lips. Then another. And then another. The gentle, feathery kisses were both torturous and intoxicating. Kingsley loved them, but at the same time, he wanted more.

The feel of clothing was making his skin itch, and he desperately wanted to get rid of them. The same with Lorenzo, he wanted to touch and feel every inch of his skin. He wanted to run his hands on his bare body, to graze it with his teeth and mark it with his lips. Kingsley wanted all of Lorenzo pressing against all of him.

Lorenzo seemed to be on the same page, as he shifted back, just a little to be able to take his shirt off. He started unbuttoning Kingsley's shirt after that, as their eyes stared into each other's. He wasn't tearing off Kingsley's clothes as he had done earlier, but really taking his time with it.

Lorenzo's pushed Kingsley's shirt down his shoulders, as his eyes finally moved down to look at the semi-naked man. Lorenzo placed his hand on Kingsley's abdomen, running it up and down his bare skin.

"You... I know some men don't like being called beautiful but..." Lorenzo spoke softly, his voice barely a whisper. "But that's what you are. So beautiful."

Kingsley responded by hooking his hand behind Lorenzo's neck and pulling him in for another kiss. This one was much more haste, and Lorenzo showed the same urgency as he kissed back. Their arms roamed around each other's bodies, desperately needing to feel more of the other man.

Kingsley broke their kiss as he placed a hand on Lorenzo's cheek. He looked at him intently, there was no teasing smirk or sly smile on either of their faces. Just sincerity and... something else. Something more.

"So are you," Kingsley said, before moving forward to whisper in Lorenzo's ear. "And *I'm* taking *you* tonight."

Kingsley shifted again so that he could see Lorenzo's face. A part of him was expecting his boss to look taken aback, but all he could see was arousal. Lorenzo nodded, making Kingsley raise a brow.

"Okay," Lorenzo said.

Time felt like it had slowed down as the two made their way from the living room to Lorenzo's bed. Along the way, one by one their clothes came off. They fell onto the mattress, their fingers digging into each other's skin as they made out for god knows how long. They were in no hurry to rush to sex, both of them wanted to take their time.

The sigh that left Lorenzo's lips, before his soft moans made Kingsley not increase... but slow down his pace as he sucked on his dick. He wanted Lorenzo to ache for him, just the way Kingsley was aching for him.

"Just relax..." Kingsley said as he pressed a lubed-up finger against Lorenzo's hole. He was met with a little resistance. This was expected considering like him, Lorenzo wasn't used to being on the receiving end either.

Kingsley massaged Lorenzo's thigh with his other hand as he went down on him again. He was multitasking, and by the way, Lorenzo grabbed his hair and started tugging on it, he could tell that his efforts weren't going unappreciated.

As Lorenzo's moans reached his ears, Kingsley took that as an opportunity to slip another finger inside. He went in and out, slowly, scissoring and twisting his fingers to prepare the other man. His jaw was starting to hurt, so he replaced his mouth with his other hand. He finally looked up at Lorenzo, who was already looking down at him with hooded eyes.

Their foreplay lasted longer than ever before. Usually, they were always like horny teenagers rushing into bed, tearing each other's clothes off, and jumping directly to the deed. That's how most of Kingsley's one-night stands were too. But this time they were taking their time touching each other's bodies and making them feel good.

Lorenzo touched almost every inch of Kingsley's body, cherishing it with both his hands and lips. When it was time, Lorenzo tore open the condom wrapper and put it on Kingsley, before applying the lube.

"Ride me," Kingsley said. He knew it would be easier for Lorenzo if they went at his pace first. "And then I'm going to fuck you."

Lorenzo nodded as he straddled Kingsley, He positioned Kingsley's dick against his hole, before slowly sitting down on it. He winced a little, and Kingsley started soothingly massaging his sides.

"Just a little bit more, Enzo. You feel so good..." Kingsley kept whispering affirmations as Lorenzo moved slowly.

Kingsley grabbed Lorenzo's thighs, before moving his hips upwards and going all-in in a single motion. Lorenzo inhaled deeply as Kingsley kept thrusting in and out slowly, his hands were on Lorenzo's hips to keep them elevated as he moved.

As soon as the pain subsided, Lorenzo kept his hands on Kingsley's pelvis, pushing him down to stop him from moving. Kingsley looked up at him

with slight surprise, as Lorenzo started rotating his hips on his own, properly riding Kingsley.

Kingsley couldn't help but close his eyes shut and groan out Lorenzo's name because of how good that felt. He had missed the feeling. The feeling of being inside someone. And he also missed the feeling of fucking someone senseless, so he asked Lorenzo to get on his stomach.

Once behind Lorenzo, Kingsley thrust back in a single go, making Lorenzo clench the bedsheets tightly. They had taken their time going slow, and now it was Kingsley's turn to show Lorenzo how good it feels to be on this end of sex.

"Fuck! Reece... fuck..." Lorenzo's words came out broken as Kingsley increased his speed, giving it his all as he pounded inside the other man.

Kingsley gripped Lorenzo's hip with one hand, pulling his ass towards him to meet his thrusts. He used his other hand to run his fingers up and down Lorenzo's back, rather gingerly, making the man get goosebumps.

"I can keep fucking you like this all night..." Kingsley said before sighing satisfyingly as he maintained his pace.

They changed their position again, with Kingsley standing up and Lorenzo at the edge of the bed. Lorenzo started stroking his dick as Kingsley kept thrusting. Without a warning, Lorenzo came all over his abdomen. Kingsley was about to pull out when Lorenzo stopped him.

"No! Don't. Keep going," Lorenzo said.

"You sure?" Kingsley asked to confirm.

"Yes. Please..." That was all the reassurance that Kingsley needed to continue fucking Lorenzo. He was surprised at his stamina and the fact that he hadn't climaxed yet.

It didn't take long for Lorenzo's dick to harden again, and he was back to stroking it as Kingsley hooked Lorenzo's leg over his shoulder to get a

better angle. Finally, after another few minutes, Kingsley reached his orgasm, shooting inside the condom. He pulled his dick from inside Lorenzo, removed the condom before quickly tying it up and throwing it in the bin.

Lorenzo was still laying down in the same position, his breathing heavy and uneven. Kingsley went on his knees in front of Lorenzo, before taking his already sensitive dick in his mouth. Lorenzo's eyes opened wide as he felt the familiar warmth, he wasn't expecting this, but it was a pleasant, very pleasant surprise nonetheless.

Before Lorenzo knew it, he was cumming again, only in Kingsley's mouth this time.

The two lay down on the bed to catch their breaths after Kingsley wiped off the cum from Lorenzo's abdomen using tissue and disposing of it. They were sweaty and tired but well sated, to say the least. Lorenzo turned to face Kingsley, the other man copied the action so that they were looking at one another.

"Do you want to take a shower?" Lorenzo asked.

"Together?" Kingsley questioned back.

"Yes," Lorenzo answered.

"Would you be up for fucking me in there?"

"How can I say no to that?" Lorenzo replied with a small smirk, making Kingsley chuckle.

"Okay then."

"Reece, will you..." Lorenzo paused, seeming unsure.

"Hm?"

"Will you stay the night?" Lorenzo asked.

Kingsley frowned slightly, Lorenzo looked so hopeful, that he couldn't find it in his self-proclaimed cold and emotionless heart to deny his request.

"How can I say no to that?"

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Chapter 28 is now up on Patreon! I'll also be posting a bonus chapter on the 1st of September on Patreon and Ko-fi! So if you want to read about Kingsley's job interview with Lorenzo [which may or may not have Lorenzo's POV too] then well... links in bio.

I'm probably only like half-way done with King's Guard at this point, this just might be my longest book till date.

Chapter Twenty Four

Kingsley barely slept a wink.

Throughout the night, he was constantly hyper-aware of Lorenzo's arm around him, or the feel of Lorenzo's steady breath on his skin. He tried hard, he really did. From making up random scenarios in his head to counting sheep— Kingsley tried everything in order to fall asleep. But nothing worked.

So naturally, when Lorenzo's alarm rang in the morning, Kingsley was cranky as fuck.

Lorenzo pressed a soft kiss on Kingsley's forehead, before sitting up and stretching his arms. Kingsley opened his eyes, gazing at the other man who looked as if he'd be runway ready in just a minute. Whereas Kingsley was sure his sleep deprivation would be clearly visible on his face.

"Sleep well?" Lorenzo asked.

"Shut up," Kingsey grumbled. He grabbed a pillow, keeping it on his face to block off the sunlight peeking in through the blinds. Lorenzo chuckled at the grumpy man.

"Someone's clearly not a morning person," Lorenzo remarked.

"I'm barely a person right now, Enzo," Kingsley sighed, his voice coming out a bit muffled because of the pillow.

"Some coffee should humanize you," Lorenzo said as he got off the bed. "How do you take your pancakes?"

Kingsley removed the pillow from his face, perking up as soon as he heard pancakes. He looked at Lorenzo with big, excited eyes, making the other man smile softly.

"Do you have blueberries?" Kingsley asked.

"I should. Or I'll ask James to get them," Lorenzo replied thoughtfully. Kingsley looked at him in confusion, so he clarified. "James. My driver."

"Oh." Kingsley blinked. "Don't trouble him. Just loads of maple syrup and I'm a happy man."

"Glad to know you're not hard to please," Lorenzo smirked.

"Do you know what *is* hard, though?" Kingsley mirrored the sly look.

"What might that be?" Lorenzo rose a brow.

Kingsley shrugged innocently as he slowly started pulling the blanket down. First revealing his shirtless torso, and then his navy blue briefs. There was nothing left for imagination considering the prominent outline of his erection, barely contained by the single layer of clothing.

That wasn't all. The thing that aroused Lorenzo the most was the teasing smile on Kingsley's face. As if he knew the effect he had on Lorenzo. But he didn't. At least, not the full extent of it.

"You know what? Breakfast can wait." Lorenzo muttered before climbing back into the bed.

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By the time both of them were done, they were way past the need for just breakfast. Kingsley was ready to eat the entire pantry. After a not-so-quick shower, the two finally went to the kitchen. Kingsley borrowed a t-shirt and a pair of sweatpants from Lorenzo, as he sat on the counter, watching the other man go through his cupboards.

With every passing minute that they *weren't* having sex, Kingsley kept questioning himself about what he was doing there. He didn't do nights. And he definitely didn't do mornings. Even though he wasn't able to sleep, and missed his bed... he didn't feel like leaving quite just yet.
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Maybe if he had fallen asleep, then he could've justified staying the night by telling himself that he was too tired to go home. But that wasn't the case.

Kingsley maintained a neutral exterior, but he was freaking out on the inside. He couldn't remember the last time he woke up to another man's face. He hadn't done that since his senior year of school with Cole. Kingsley would've cursed himself for making this mistake, but the morning sex with Lorenzo was too good to regret.

"So, I was thinking we could finally go to Nico's and grab some lunch? Or would you like to order in?" Lorenzo asked as he poured some coffee for the two of them.

"Yeah sure— wait, what date is it?" Kingsley asked.

"The 30th. Why?" Lorenzo questioned back.

"Fuck," Kingsley muttered, getting off the counter. "I've got to meet my dad for lunch today."

"Oh," Lorenzo said. He looked at his wristwatch, before frowning. "It's late. Maybe you should reschedule?"

"Can't. He's, uh, he's sort of a busy man," Kingsley said before walking back into Lorenzo's room to grab his clothes and other belongings.

Kingsley stripped back down and started putting on his own clothes. They probably weren't good enough for whatever fancy restaurant he was supposed to meet his dad at, but they'd have to do for now. He was too late to go back home and change.

Once dressed, with his wallet, keys and phone safely tucked in his pockets, Kingsley went to the kitchen to say goodbye to Lorenzo again. This was the part that he hated the most. He never quite knew what to say.

"So, uh, I'll be—"

Lorenzo cut Kingsley off by leaning in and connecting their lips. It took him a second, but Kingsley kissed back, feeling surprised. A part of

Kingsley was overjoyed that Lorenzo had kissed him again, and it wasn't just in the heat of the moment last night.

"Have fun," Lorenzo said softly.

"Uh." Kingsley blinked. "Okay. Bye."

Lorenzo chuckled at the dumbfounded man, as he nodded. Kingsley turned around to leave when he felt Lorenzo smack his ass. Kingsley glanced back to give him a hard glare, and Lorenzo just winked at him in response.

As Kingsley walked out the door, he finally realized that maybe, just maybe... Lorenzo was more than a one (or multiple) time fuck.

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Once Kingsley was in the cab and on his way to meet his dad, he finally checked his phone. He had a couple of messages from Roan, as well as a voicemail, so he decided to call his friend.

"What's up, my man?" Kingsley said as soon as Roan picked up.

"Jesus, why do you sound straight?" Roan retorted

"I do? That's weird considering I was *very, very* gay last night." Kingsley paused for a moment. "And this morning."

"Ah, so that's why you didn't reply to my memes." Roan hummed. *"Lorenzo again?"*

"Yeah." Kingsley's voice was curt.

"What happened to not—"

"Shut up."

"But—"
~~~

"Nope. Don't wanna hear it." Kingsley replied, he could hear Roan sigh on the other end.

"Fine. I hope you know what you're doing," Roan said

"Uh, when exactly has knowing or not knowing what I'm doing stopped me from doing anything?" Kingsley replied.

"Right. I keep forgetting that you're an idiot," Roan retorted.

"Yeah whatever babe, love you too," Kingsley chuckled. "I've got to go now."

"Eat a dick. Bye."

"What kind of an insult is that? You know I love eating dick." Kingsley said. "Bye."

Roan hung up the call after a long sigh, making Kingsley laugh again. The cab driver cleared his throat uncomfortably at Kingsley's comment as he looked at him through the rearview mirror, making the young man raise his challenging brow. The driver awkwardly looked away, and Kingsley was pretty sure he started driving just a tad bit faster after that.

The lunch was at a high-end country club, the kind where you spend thousands just for the membership. Kingsley walked in with his wrinkled shirt, not caring about the judgmental looks of the other one percenters.

The attendant led him to his table, where his father was already waiting for him. Kingsley joined him, and his father kept the menu down to greet his son. The two ordered and casually started catching up. Spending time with his dad was *tense* , but Kingsley promised him that he would try to reconcile with his father. And if anything, Kingsley was a man of his word.

"So, are you seeing someone?" Gianni asked.

"Not really," Kingsley muttered. "There's this one guy but... never mind."

"Oh?" His father rose a questioning brow, making Kingsley frown.

"Wait— you know I'm gay, right? I can't remember if I ever came out to you." Kingsley couldn't recall.

"I'm aware." Gianni nodded. "So what of this guy?"

"Nothing. It's just complicated." Kingsley shrugged lightly. He paused for a moment, pressing his lips in a thin line as he thought. "Can I ask you something?"

"Anything."

"Why did you never get married?" Kingsley asked.

"Huh," Gianni looked slightly taken aback. "I suppose I never fell in love with anyone. Never saw the point of marriage or having a family. Like they say... I'm married to my work."

"Is that why you were absent from my life?" Kingsley asked, he continued before his father could answer. "Don't give me the 'I did the best for you' answer again. You said you never wanted a family. So is that the reason?"

"Reece..." Gianni sighed, keeping down his fork. "Part of the reason, yes. I always wanted to— want to do the best by you. But truthfully, I never had the desire for a partner or a family."

"Well..." Kingsley paused to take a long gulp of his wine. "At least you're being honest."

"I suppose the least I owe you is honesty."

"Right, so are you, like, aromantic?" Kingsley asked. Gianni furrowed his eyes in confusion.

"Excuse me?"

"Never mind. This is good food. Do you think they roll their pasta by hand?"

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Start of the month double update! Chapter 29 AND a King's Guard Bonus Chapter: Kingsley's Job Interview with Lorenzo is now up on Patreon! Link in bio.

Chapter Twenty Five

"So..."

"So?"

"So." Nina paused, looking around the breakroom to make sure no one was listening in to their conversation. "I have something to tell you."

"Spill the tea," Kingsley replied as he poured himself some coffee, before turning to face Nina, giving her his undivided attention.

"Miles and I are dating," Nina confessed.

"Oh." Kingsley hummed with a nod. "Okay."

"Okay? *Okay?"* Nina frowned, looking almost offended. "That's it? That's all you have to say?"

"Can't say I didn't see it coming." Kingsley shrugged. "I'm only surprised it took this long."

"Whatever," Nina muttered. "We spoke to H.R. about it and signed the disclosure forms."

"Wait—" now Kingsley was taken aback, "—you're H.R. official?"

"Uh-huh," Nina smirked, as Kingsley stared at her with wide eyes.

"Damn," he said lowly. "That's serious."

"We didn't really want to tell anyone in the office before we spoke to H.R. Not like we want to announce it on the intercom now... but we just wanted to be safe and do things the right way," Nina explained.

"I'm happy for you both," Kingsley said, his voice sincere. "If you hurt him, I'm chopping off your bangs. If he hurts you, I'm chopping off his balls."

"You're so sweet when you get all protective and violent." Nina aw-ed sarcastically.

"Celebratory drinks tonight?" Kingsley asked.

"You just need an excuse to drink."

"Joke's on you—" Kingsley scoffed, "I can drink plenty without an excuse too."

"Fine. Usual time and place?" Nina questioned. "I'll let Miles and Anwar know."

"Yeah su— wait, is it cool if Roan and Kai join? I was supposed to meet them tonight."

"Sure, I really liked them from the New Year party," Nina replied.

"They liked you too, especially Kai."

After talking some more, the two left the breakroom and went to their respective cabins. Kingsley kept glancing at the tab on which his day's calendar was open. He had a meeting with Lorenzo in about twenty minutes, and every time he saw the man's name on the screen, he felt like he had— no, definitely not butterflies. That doesn't happen in real life. Especially not to Kingsley.

Kingsley stared at his wristwatch, watching the seconds tick.

0 3:59:58

03:59:59

04:00:00

Kingsley stood up in a flash, almost making Nina flinch at the sudden action. Kingsley grabbed his laptop and headed towards Lorenzo's office, his legs moving faster than usual. What to say? Kingsley was a good employee.

He knocked on the door, waiting for a muffled 'come in', before entering. Lorenzo looked up from the screen, a soft smile on his lips as Kingsley walked closer. Neither of them said anything as Kingsley sat down and opened his laptop. He cleared his throat, as he finally turned his eyes on his boss.

"So, I've been working on the glitch we're facing on the app and—"

Despite the presence of the usual tension in the room, the two actually had the meeting that they were scheduled to have. At some point, they moved from Lorenzo's desk to the couch, as it was easier for Kingsley to show and explain the updates he had been working on that way.

The sides of their thighs were pressed together, their faces awfully near as they both stared at the screen. Kingsley was trying his hardest to focus as he spoke, but it was proving to be near impossible as his mind kept drifting off to how close they were sitting. This caused Kingsley to stumble on his words a couple of times, but the two were finally done just before the clock struck five.

"Some of us are going out for drinks tonight," Kingsley said. "Do you want to join?"

"I would love—" Lorenzo paused as he furrowed his brows before frowning. "I have a dinner with some of the board members tonight."

"No worries," Kingsley replied a little too quickly as he grabbed his laptop and stood up, ready to leave.

"Hey," Lorenzo called out as he grabbed Kingsley's arm to stop him. Kingsley turned back, confusion visible on his face. The side of Lorenzo's lips turned upwards as he grabbed Kingsley's collar, pulling him down to connect their lips.

The kiss was short. And it left Kingsley even more puzzled as he walked out of Lorenzo's office back to his desk.

Since when did the two start kissing just for the sake of... kissing? Outside of hooking up?

The question followed Kingsley as he started packing his things, getting ready to leave. He glanced to his side, seeing Nina and Miles talking to each other with wide smiles and visible happiness on their faces. They were standing just a tad bit closer to one another than they used to, and anyone with eyes could see that they were both head over heels for each other.

Kingsley couldn't remove his gaze from them. A part of him was happy for the two, but the other part was... jealous. Jealous that they could be open about their relationship with one another. Even if he and Lorenzo disclosed their relationship to H.R., it would still be a topic of conflict considering Lorenzo was not just his immediate supervisor, but the C.E.O. of the company.

On top of that, Kingsley was aware that Lorenzo's relationship with the board of directors was rather rocky after the whole investor ordeal. So, anything like this could potentially lead to Lorenzo facing a lot of backlash from not only the general public but their colleagues and stockholders too.

Kingsley shook his head lightly as he tore his eyes away from Nina and Miles. He didn't even realize he was gripping his bag tightly, causing his knuckles to hurt. He wasn't even in a relationship with Lorenzo, so why was he thinking this way? He felt glad that they were all heading to a bar because he really needed a drink to clear his head.

The drink didn't, in fact, clear his head. Nor did the three he had after the first. Unlike the others that were either dancing or talking, Kingsley was sitting in the corner with a permanent frown on his face. He tried his damnedest to appear happy for the couple who the night was about, but it was proving harder and harder by the minute.

"Sick of the lovesick couples, ey?" Anwar asked with a long sigh as he down next to Kingsley. He knew his co-worker was talking about Nina and

Miles as well as Roan and Kai, who after years of being together still seemed like they were in their honeymoon phase.

"I'm happy for them," Kingsley muttered. "Even if they make me sick to my stomach sometimes."

"Sounds about right." Anwar chuckled. "I think we should make a pact."

"A pact?" Kingsley questioned.

"Yeah." Anwar nodded. "If both of us are single ten years from now... then we get married."

"Aren't you straight or something?" Kingsley asked, looking amused as he turned to face his colleague.

"Yeah, so what?" Anwar shrugged. "We'll be just like any other married couple. Unhappy and sexless."

"Wow." Kingsley chuckled. "And I thought that *I* was the cynical one."

"We'll just be two bros... sitting six feet apart on the couch watching the game with beers in our hands," Anwar said.

"I hate sports," Kingsley stated.

"Alright, we'll share the remote. Fifty-fifty."

"Deal."

Anwar left to grab another beer, as Kingsley's phone buzzed in his pocket. He took it out, immediately perking up as he saw that the notification was from Lorenzo.

To : Reece | From : Lorenzo

Just got done with dinner. Shoot me in the head.

To : Lorenzo | From : Reece

Are you okay?

To : Reece | From : Lorenzo

Would definitely be a hundred times better if I could see you.

To : Lorenzo | From : Reece

I'm on my way.

Kingsley didn't waste any time in finding his friends and telling them that he was leaving. They all protested, but he claimed that he had a massive headache. Roan gave him a knowing look, clearly not fooled by Kingsley's acting. He winked at the man, as if telling Kingsley that he had his back. He immediately tried to get the attention away from Kingsley by announcing that the next round of shots was on him.

It didn't hit Kingsley until he reached Lorenzo's door. Every single time the man called, he went running towards him. It was as if every rule he had had no importance when it came to Lorenzo. His usually strong resolve was broken down too. But every single minute that Kingsley spent with Lorenzo... he started caring about all this lesser and lesser.

Lorenzo greeted Kingsley with a soft kiss, once again catching him off guard by the gentleness of his actions.

Kingsley was expecting that the two would jump in the bed the moment he'd enter Lorenzo's apartment, but that's not what happened.

"How about we watch a movie tonight?" Lorenzo asked.

"A movie?" Kingsley asked as if making sure. He tilted his head in slight confusion.

"Yeah, you know... a motion picture?" Lorenzo answered with an amused smirk.

"Oh." Kingsley blinked. "Okay."

"What are you in the mood for? Action? Thriller?" Lorenzo glanced at the other man. "Romance?"

"Thriller works," Kingsley muttered.

"Sure. I'll make some popcorn, set it all up," Lorenzo said as the two walked into the living room. "How about you change into something comfortable too?"

"This is comfortable."

"You're wearing *jeans*, Reece. They don't look very comfortable."

"I can just get naked, then," Kingsley retorted, making Lorenzo laugh again.

"You can turn anything sexual, can't you?" Lorenzo shook his head lightly. "As much as I'd love that... I'll get you some sweatpants."

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chapter 30 is now up on patreon! link in bio.

Chapter Twenty Six

If anyone was to ask Kingsley whether he'd have imagined he'd spend the night sitting next to his boss on the couch, watching a movie, he would've laughed. It was funny how Kingsley could very easily imagine having sex with the other man, doing the dirtiest things possible, but something as simple as watching a movie together felt... surreal.

Sometime during the night, when they were on their second movie, the two gravitated closer. Their legs were propped up on the table in front of them, and Lorenzo had not-so-subtly wrapped his arm around Kingsley's shoulder. That had made Kingsley roll his eyes, but he made no attempts in removing the arm. If anything, he subconsciously shifted more towards the other man. They were sharing a blanket, with the empty bowl of popcorn kept beside them on the floor.

"I'm sleepy." Kingsley muttered as the credits started rolling. He laid down on the couch, just his upper half as his legs dangled off.

Lorenzo chuckled as he moved behind Kingsley, laying down too. Both of them pulled their legs up, entangling them as they tried to fit into the very limited space. Safe to say, it was tight, and Lorenzo had his arm wrapped around Kingsley's waist to secure him in the position.

Kingsley hummed softly, feeling warm and comfortable as Lorenzo pulled him as close as humanly possible. Kingsley's eyes were closed shut as he felt Lorenzo place chaste kisses on his neck and shoulder. Lorenzo's hand travelled underneath Kingsley's shirt, running along his sides. Kingsley's breath hitched, Lorenzo's touch bringing goose bumps to his skin.

Kingsley reacted, pushing his hips further backwards. He could feel Lorenzo's erection pressing against him, and before he knew it... he was hard too. Lorenzo's hand rubbed Kingsley abdomen, feeling his soft and firm skin, toned body and faint abs under his rough palm.

"Let's move to my bedroom, *cariño."* Lorenzo whispered in Kingsley's ear. Kingsley hummed in response as he willed himself to get up. He was feeling way too comfortable in the position, so that task was no easy feat.

Lorenzo grabbed Kingsley's hand, holding it as they walked inside the man's bedroom. Instead of taking off his clothes, like Kingsley had expected, Lorenzo got in the bed without a word. Kingsley followed, not asking any questions, and Lorenzo pulled up the blanket to cover them both.

The two laid down quietly, facing one another. There was some distance between them, and Kingsley kept waiting for Lorenzo to close it, but he didn't. Lorenzo just kept staring at Kingsley, an unreadable expression on his face as Kingsley met his gaze with a slightly puzzled look.

Lorenzo finally made a move, but it was just a finger trailing down the side of Kingsley's face. A shiver went down Kingsley's spine, as he closed his eyes, giving in to the gentle touch. When he opened his eyes again, Lorenzo was still looking at him. Kingsley may not have been very good at reading people, but it would've been near impossible to not notice the softness in Lorenzo's eyes.

"This... this is dangerous." Lorenzo finally broke the silence, his voice barely above a whisper. The statement made Kingsley frown.

"I know. Your job—"

"I'm not even thinking about my job, right now," Lorenzo interrupted with his clarification. "I should, but I'm not. I guess that makes it all even scarier."

"What are you trying to say, Lorenzo?" Kingsley questioned.

"I'm saying that... I'm getting dangerously addicted to you," Lorenzo admitted. "And I don't know how to go back to... back to not being with you."

Kingsley gulped, his eyes slightly widened in shock because of what Lorenzo just said. All of Kingsley's commitment and intimacy issues hit him at once like a ten wheeler truck. Lorenzo was opening up his heart to him, but his throat felt dry as he tried to think of what to say to the man.

But he couldn't think. Kingsley felt like his brain was vacant yet crowded with thoughts at the thoughts at the same time.

Kingsley could tell that Lorenzo was expecting a response. Who wouldn't? The hopeful look on the man's face was making Kingsley's heart ache with every passing second, and the silence was filling the room with more and more tension.

When Lorenzo figured that Kingsley wasn't going to say anything, he sighed. He removed his hand from Kingsley's face, as he closed his eyes, and his lips turned downwards in a soft frown.

"I'm so—"

"Lorenzo..." Kingsley gulped.

"Yeah?" In an instant, the hope was back on Lorenzo's face.

"I'm not... I can't— I..." Kingsley stumbled on his words.

"Reece... what's holding you back?" Lorenzo asked, he furrowed his brows, genuinely wanting to know the reason. "Apart from our... work-life, that is. We can always figure something out regarding that."

"It's not that," Kingsley answered.

"Then what?" Lorenzo paused. "Is it— are you not... are you not into me?"

"I'm laying in bed with you, of course I'm into you!" Kingsley exclaimed, feeling offended that Lorenzo could even dare to think so.

"I don't mean just sexually. I mean more than that," Lorenzo clarified again.

"It's been a long time since I've... this is hard for me. I'm not— I'm not good with heartbreak." Kingsley admitted, he pressed his lips in a thin line, his teeth grinding. Opening up and being vulnerable was taking everything he had in him.

"Why are you thinking about heartbreak when we haven't even begun?" Lorenzo frowned.

"It all ends, right? That shit is inevitable." Kingsley huffed softly.

"That's a bleak way to look at things," Lorenzo retorted.

"Aren't you divorced?" Kingsley bit his tongue as soon as he saw the look of surprise on Lorenzo's face. "I'm sorry. I didn't— I didn't mean it like that."

"It's okay," Lorenzo said.

"What I'm trying to say is that people don't stay. And I'd rather not get too attached if this is the case," Kingsley explained.

"I'm sure you already know anything that I can say to you." Lorenzo kept a hand on Kingsley's cheek, shifting just a tad bit closer. "So, all I'm going to ask you is... what does your heart want?"

His parents. His grandparents. His best friend. His boyfriend. All the people that meant something to Kingsley had left him or let him down in one way or the other. After everything, he had sworn to himself that he would never, ever fall again. He would *always* keep his guard up.

But Lorenzo... it wasn't just the other man's touch that kept Kingsley up night after night. It was the way his eyes followed Kingsley's every move when they were in a room together. It was the subtle winks and the hearty laughs.

Kingsley didn't just want Lorenzo's body. He wanted to be the one to make him smile. He wanted to be the one Lorenzo could share both his troubles and his joys with. He wanted to listen to every word the man said. He

wanted to go to sleep next to him, and look at him the first thing when he woke up.

Kingsley hadn't lied when he told Lorenzo that he wanted more. But he was only now realising the extent of his desires.

"Tell me, Reece." Lorenzo's thumb caressed Kingsley's cheek as he spoke. "What does your heart want?"

"You." Kingsley's voice was low, and his heart speeding like a bullet train. The corner of Lorenzo's lips turned upwards in a soft smile as he finally leaned forward.

Their lips connected, and that's all they did that night. Just stayed in each other's arms, kissing, till the noise of cars in the streets died down. Lorenzo was the first to fall asleep, but once again, Kingsley couldn't.

This time, however, Kingsley couldn't sleep not because he wanted to be in his own bed. Or because he was anxious about staying over at someone else's house. It was because he finally realised the weight of the fact that he had lied to the man he was in bed with.

Lorenzo didn't know who Kingsley was, or what he had done. Kingsley was a lot of things, but he wasn't a liar. He was aware that the longer he kept all this to himself, the deeper he'd fall in the pit that he had dug.

Kingsley knew he had to come clean, and that he had to do it soon, before it was too late.

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chapter 31 is now up on patreon! big things coming ;)

Chapter Twenty Seven

"I'm fucked."

"I know we're close and all, but I don't need to keep hearing about your sex life so often," Roan spoke, as he turned left.

"Not fucked in *that* way. Well, that way too..." Kingsley replied with a smirk, before shaking his head and getting serious again. "Can you stop joking for a minute?"

"Fine. Speak, son," Roan said.

"Things are getting more... complicated. More heated. With Lorenzo and I," Kingsley sighed.

"What else did you expect when you started taking the train to pound town with your boss?"

"It was pretty simple in the start!" Kingsley said in his defense. "But now... I don't know what we are. First, we were colleagues. Then we were fuck buddies. And now... I don't even know anymore."

"So, you're like dating? What a shocker. A concept totally unheard of," Roan deadpanned, stopping at the red light.

"Can you tone down the sarcasm by, like, ten degrees?" Kingsley narrowed his eyes at his best friend.

"Alright, alright. Where's your head at?" Roan asked.

"I don't know. He wants more. I think. I want more too. I think..."

"So, just date. Fuck. Fall in love. Get married!"

"Come on, man." Kingsley groaned in frustration. "You don't get it. Your love life is simple."

"No, it isn't."

"Really? You married your childhood best friend. What's simpler than that cliché?" Kingsley retorted.

"And your little office romance isn't cliché?" Roan glanced at the other man, raising a challenging brow.

"Touché," Kingsley muttered. "I'm just way out of my depth, man. This whole... dating thing isn't me."

"You've dated before." Roan pointed out.

"And that's exactly why I don't want to go down that road anymore," Kingsley said.

"So, you're going to what? Stay single for the rest of your life? Be the middle-aged uncle that wears bowling shirts and sips mimosas at noon?" Roan questioned.

"Uncle? I didn't know Kai was pregnant!" Kingsley joked, slapping Roan's upper arm as he chuckled. Roan just rolled his eyes in return.

"Shut up."

"I think I'd be more of a Hawaiian shirt than bowling shirt sort of guy, you know?" Kingsley hummed.

"And you were asking *me* to be serious?" Roan replied.

"Right. Yeah, uh, back to the topic." Kingsley paused, hesitating a little before speaking up again. "Lorenzo sort of asked me to go somewhere with him."

"What?"

A few hours ago.

Kingsley was regretting every decision that led to him going to college and then getting a job. He rubbed his eyes, struggling not to fall asleep as he worked on the report that was due in just a couple of hours.

Kingsley had spent the night at Lorenzo's, despite it being the middle of the week. Kingsley knew Lorenzo would insist on dropping him off at his apartment before work, and there were only so many excuses that Kingsley can come up with to keep him from finally showing where he lived. That was why Kingsley left early in the morning when Lorenzo was sound asleep.

He left a handwritten note. And a text, just in case Lorenzo failed to notice the piece of paper beside his bed.

It took a while to get a cab at four in the morning, and Kingsley planned on taking a small nap before heading to work. The next thing Kingsley knew, he was being woken up by Roan shaking his shoulders almost violently. Roan had an extra key to Kingsley's penthouse, and when he didn't answer his texts or calls, the man decided to check up on his best friend.

Kingsley yelled a 'fuck' when he noticed the time, before rushing to change his clothes. Both he and Roan were late for work since his multiple alarms failed to wake him up. Kingsley apologized and thanked Roan, promising to make it up to him. The blonde man just rolled his eyes in response, muttering something about being tired.

Kingsley yawned as he typed on his laptop, dangerously close to falling asleep at work. To be fair, he only had his boss to blame for keeping him up till late the previous night. Thinking about what went down between them just a few hours ago energized Kingsley just a little bit.

"Kingsley," Nina called out, but he was too zoned out to hear her. "Kingsley!"

"Huh? What?" Kingsley blinked as he jolted out of his half-dazed state. He turned to his side to see Nina standing next to him, holding her laptop with

a puzzled look on her face.

"Get up. It's time for the meeting," Nina said.

"There's a meeting?" Kingsley groaned, making Nina roll her eyes.

"Yes. And don't fall asleep during it unless you want Lorenzo to fire you in front of everyone," Nina stated.

"Right," Kingsley muttered. He sighed tiredly before grabbing his laptop and following Nina into the conference room, where everyone was already seated.

Kingsley's eyes found Lorenzo as soon as he entered the room. The boss was looking right at him too, the edges of his lips twitched as if he was about to smile upon seeing Kingsley, but he gathered himself rather quickly and looked away. If Kingsley wasn't struggling and using every ounce of strength he had in him to stay awake; he would've smirked at the other man.

The meeting began, and thankfully Kingsley didn't have to present anything. He just had to sit, listen and make notes. *Easy enough,* he thought.

It was anything but easy in reality, though. He kept almost dozing off, but he thanked his lucky stars for Nina, who kept kicking his foot or pinching his arm to keep him awake. Even if anyone else in the room noticed, nobody said anything.

Not until Lorenzo asked Kingsley to stay back after the meeting.

As the other employees started leaving the room, Kingsley tried his hardest not to yawn. Nina shot him a look as if wishing him good luck. Kingsley simply shrugged in response, he wasn't worried about Lorenzo reprimanding him.

"I missed you this morning," Lorenzo said once they were the only two left in the room, and the door was safely shut.

There was only a glass wall separating them from the rest of the office, so they couldn't get physically close or act suspicious, but at least they could speak freely. Lorenzo got up from his chair to sit next to Kingsley, maintaining a professional distance.

"I left you a note," Kingsley replied.

" *Took a cab. See you at the office, boss man."* Lorenzo chuckled as he quoted Kingsley's handwritten note. "So romantic."

"I'll be sure to draw a heart next time," Kingsley said.

"You seem tired," Lorenzo pointed out.

"Yeah, because *someone* decided to wake me up in the middle of the night because he was horny," Kingsley gave Lorenzo an unimpressed look, making the other man smile slyly.

"I didn't see you complaining, only choking on my—"

"Did you ask me to stay back just so you could recall the events of last night?" Kingsley rose a questioning brow.

"As much as I'd like to recall them over and over again...no," Lorenzo paused. His expression turned serious as if he was debating what to say. Finally, he nodded, before speaking up. "There's a conference in San Francisco next week."

"Okay?"

"I'll be going there," Lorenzo stated.

"Oh, okay."

"And I would like you to come with me," Lorenzo paused, "that is if you want to."

"Huh?" Kingsley blinked. "Won't it be suspicious if I go with you? You usually take Jiya to all these meetings."

"It's not a meeting, it's a tech conference, for one. Not Jiya's specialization. Plus, she'll be in London for a meeting," Lorenzo answered. "Everyone knows you and I worked... closely during the investor meetings so it shouldn't be a huge shock that I'm taking you."

"Tech conference, huh? Sounds nerdy," Kingsley remarked. "Lorenzo?"

"Yeah?"

"Are you asking me to come with you as your employee or as your..." Kingsley trailed off. "Because I want to know where to draw the lines."

"Both," Lorenzo answered confidently. "With your knowledge and work experience, you're the right person to accompany me to the conference. And post that, we'll have plenty of time to... hang out."

"Hang out?" Kingsley chuckled. "What are we? In high school?"

"You know what I mean," Lorenzo muttered. "We can stay a couple of extra days, over the weekend. Just enjoy the city and the company."

"Give me a day or two to think about it?" Kingsley asked. Lorenzo stared at him as if a little upset that Kingsley didn't say yes immediately. But he nodded nonetheless.

"Take time till this weekend. I'll have to ask H.R. to make arrangements by Monday," Lorenzo said.

"Thank you," Kingsley replied. "Am I free to leave now? I have the Dawson report to finish."

"Of course," Lorenzo nodded again. Kingsley gave him a tight-lipped smile, before getting up from the chair and grabbing his things. Lorenzo remained seated, just watching the other man.

Kingsley was about to leave the room when he turned around to face Lorenzo again. He was always a little loose-lipped when tired, but he never could've imagined saying what he was about to say.

"I'm sorry for leaving early this morning," Kingsley said. Lorenzo looked quite taken aback by his reaction.

"You are? Why?"

"I just am," Kingsley shrugged. "It's... it's nice to wake up next to you."

"Oh." Lorenzo cleared his throat, the shock on his face still visible. "Maybe next time you stay over on a work night you can carry a change of clothes with you?"

"That's a good idea," Kingsley noted.

"Great."

"Great," Kingsley repeated. His small confession instantly made the air around them heavy. Kingsley looked away, walking out the door as he kept muttering to himself. "Dawson report. Gotta finish the Dawson report."

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chapter 32 is up on Patreon! link in bio.

Chapter Twenty Eight

"I swear to God if you don't take your feet off the table then I'm breaking your kneecaps with a hammer," Kai threatened.

"Wow. I'm terrified," Kingsley deadpanned as he removed his legs, keeping them down. "Is this how you talk to your students?"

"You're not my student so I can talk to you however I like," Kai replied as he folded his arms in front of his chest.

"That's not role model behavior," Kingsley spoke as he shook his head in fake disappointment. "Kill people with kindness, Kai. Not hammers."

"Can we kick him out?" Kai asked Roan, turning towards the blonde was who currently in the kitchen, making dinner. "Please?"

"Unfortunately, it's too late for that," Roan muttered without looking up as he stirred the curry in the pot.

"You both love me. I'm like the son you never had," Kingsley retorted.

"Yep. You're just like an immature six-year-old kid that's missing from our lives." Kai narrowed his eyes at the other man, who chuckled in response.

"Immature six-year-old? Nah, I act at least like I'm nine," Kingsley said.

"Nine-year-olds have many more functioning brain cells than you do."

"You're one to—" Kingsley was interrupted by his phone vibrating in his pocket. He took it out, a small smile automatically making its way on his face when he saw the contact name of the person calling him. "Hey."

"Hi," Lorenzo said. *"Sorry to call you out of the blue on a Friday night but... I was wondering if you wanted to grab dinner with me?"*

"That would've been nice, but uh," Kingsley looked at Kai, who was staring back at him with curiosity. "I sort of have plans already."

"Ah. Alright, then. Some other time—"

"Call him over!" Kai yelled.

Kingsley's eyes widened, and even Roan looked up from the food that he was so focused on to see what was going on in the living room. Kai was up to something by the visible mischievous smile on his face.

"What?" Kingsley blinked.

"Call him here! Tell me him to have dinner with us!" Kai repeated. Loudly. And Kingsley was sure that Lorenzo would've heard it on the other end as well.

Kingsley wasn't exactly a fan of the idea, but if he didn't at least extend the invitation after Kai's interference, then that would seem rude. Kingsley bit his tongue, glaring at Kai who was watching him back with a look that screamed ' *payback* .'

"Roan's making dinner. You should come over," Kingsley spoke. Roan rolled his eyes, probably at how Kingsley didn't even *ask* Lorenzo but stated it.

"I don't want to intrude," Lorenzo replied.

"It's no intrusion, I swear," Kingsley said.

A part of him was hoping that Lorenzo would say no once more, and then he wouldn't push for him to come again. The idea of Lorenzo having dinner with Kingsley and his best friends made him nervous. Not because he was ashamed of either of the parties, but because this felt like something... boyfriends would do.

The two of them still hadn't had a conversation about what exactly they were doing and what they were. Kingsley was trying to avoid it, and from how it seemed, Lorenzo wasn't in a rush to slap on a label on them either.

Labels scared Kingsley, so he was glad. But it wasn't just his fear of commitment that made him unsure about Lorenzo, but the fact that he didn't want to start a relationship on lies. Kingsley knew he had to come clean sooner or later, and then it would be on Lorenzo to either accept it or... not.

The fact that the truth could potentially ruin everything terrified Kingsley even more. He had his heart in the right place, and he only ever wanted to help Lorenzo, but the revelation could go either way.

"Okay. Text me the address?" Lorenzo asked, sounding a bit hesitant.

"Sure," Kingsley replied, licking his lower lip nervously.

Lorenzo hung up the call after that, and Kingsley sighed before quickly texting him the address of Roan and Kai's apartment. Lorenzo replied saying he would be there in thirty minutes. Kingsley pressed his lips in a thin line as he kept his phone aside, before looking back up at his friend.

Kai was watching Kingsley with an amused grin, happy that his plan to annoy the other man worked. None of them spoke about it, and they fell into their usual banter. Kingsley tried to put up an unbothered façade, but he was internally freaking out about what was going to happen.

Roan tried to lighten up the mood, narrowing his eyes at Kai as he entered the living room with a glass of old fashioned, one of Kingsley's favorite drinks. Kai pouted, looking up at his husband.

"Where's mine?"

"You know where the bar is, idiot," Roan retorted before quickly bending down to press a kiss on Kai's head. Kingsley chuckled, raising his glass as he looked at Kai before taking a sip.

Being the punctual man that he was, as expected there was a knock on the door half an hour later. Before Kingsley could even move, Kai rushed to the entrance to invite Lorenzo in. Kingsley rolled his eyes in irritation but stayed quiet as the two men walked in. Kai was holding a bottle of expensive wine that no doubt Lorenzo brought.

Roan washed his hands, walking to the living room with his apron still on to greet the guest. Kingsley watched without a word as the three men made small talk before Kai asked Lorenzo to take a seat. Lorenzo sat down next to Kingsley on the couch, giving him a polite smile. Roan went back to the kitchen to check up on the food, leaving the three men to talk.

"You have a really nice place," Lorenzo said as he looked around the room.

Kai and Roan's apartment was very homely, with pictures on the walls, mementos from their vacations, and the whole deal. It was partly why Kingsley liked spending time there instead of his massive penthouse that always felt foreign and empty.

"Thank you," Kai grinned. "We recently moved here because it's closer to both mine and Roan's workplace."

"Reece told me you were a teacher?" Lorenzo asked.

"Yeah," Kai nodded. "I just got my certification. I teach history."

"I always thought you'd end up being an accountant or something," Kingsley finally spoke.

"And I always thought you'd end up being a stripper, but here we are!" Kai retorted. Kingsley narrowed his eyes at the man, and Lorenzo chuckled as he looked between the two friends.

"A stripper?" Lorenzo asked between laughs. "Do I want to know why?"

"Oh, Kingsley here was quite the party animal back in his days," Kai answered.

"You were?" Lorenzo questioned, looking at Kingsley with an amused smile. "Is that how you all became friends?"

"Nah," Kai furrowed his brows, recalling how he met Kingsley. "We grew up together but I think we only became friends after you and Roan broke up, right?"

"Yep," Kingsley muttered.

"You and Roan?" Lorenzo asked, raising an eyebrow in surprise. Kingsley sighed, realizing he should probably elaborate before Lorenzo got the wrong idea.

"We dated for like a month back in... what was it? Sophomore year of school?" Kingsley recalled.

"Yeah," Kai nodded. "On that note, you never really told us why you broke up with Ro."

"Seriously?" Kingsley deadpanned. "You both were blind in school but I wasn't."

"What do you mean?" Kai asked, confused.

"It was so clear that you both were in love with each other but you didn't even know it," Kingsley explained. "You both stared at each other like the other hung the moon and the stars. I was the one dating Ro but *I* felt like the third wheel between you two."

"Oh," Kai muttered, his cheeks turning pink as he glanced at Roan behind the counter, who was in his own world as he prepared dinner.

"Dumbass," Kingsley grumbled.

"Anyway!" Kai continued. "Back to Kingsley being quite the wild one. This dude threw the best parties in town. Oh! I have pictures!"

"Kai... no—"

"I'd *love* to see pictures," Lorenzo grinned as Kai stood up from his recliner to sit in between the two men.

Kingsley rolled his eyes once again as Kai pulled out his phone and started showing Lorenzo old pictures of them from high school and college, telling back stories as he swiped through his gallery.

"—and he got this nose piercing because he was dared to do it and Jeremy said he would buy Kingsley waffles if he went through with it. Can you believe that?" Kai finished.

"I was drunk and I like waffles," Kingsley muttered in his defense.

"Is that eyeliner?" Lorenzo asked as Kai zoomed in on one of the pictures.

"Can't imagine Kingsley looking this emo now at work, huh?" Kai replied. "How times change."

"I still wear it sometimes when I'm out," Kingsley pitched in.

Lorenzo looked up at Kingsley, ignoring Kai who was still showing him pictures and going on about the old days. Kingsley's eyes met Lorenzo's, which held a certain glint in them. Lorenzo winked, and Kingsley shifted in his seat, feeling flustered. Kai was oblivious to the flirting that was happening around him, as he kept going on.

"Oh," Kai muttered as he swiped to the next picture.

It was from high school, taken at one of Kingsley's parties. Kai was clicking the selfie with Roan, and in the background were Kingsley and his ex-boyfriend, Cole, who was kissing his cheek. Kai awkwardly turned his phone off, and before he could say something again, Roan called out for him.

"Kai? Babe, can you help me set up the table?"

"Sure!" Kai eagerly replied and rushed to stand up and walked over to his husband, happy that he was saved by the bell, leaving the two men alone.

Lorenzo shifted closer to Kingsley, putting a hand on his knee as he looked at him. He was about to say something, but he turned to make sure that Kai and Roan weren't listening in.

"Do they, uh, do they know—"

"They do," Kingsley answered truthfully. "I know you don't want people to know, so I understand if you're mad but they're my best friends and they're not going to go around telling—"

"It's fine." Lorenzo interrupted Kingsley's rambling, sending a wave of relief down the other man's body. "I'm not mad at you. I just asked so that I would know whether I can..."

"Whether you can what?" Kingsley asked, tilting his head slightly, looking puzzled.

Lorenzo smiled before leaning in, pressing a soft kiss against Kingsley's lips. Kingsley was caught off-guard, but he replied rather quickly and eagerly kissed the man back. Lorenzo's hand squeezed Kingsley's thigh, before he pulled away, the smile still intact on his face.

"Hi."

"Hi?"

***

E arly update because why not? Chapter 34 is now up on Patreon! Link in bio.

I'll be posting King's Guard twice a week on Patreon now, and am planning on finishing it there by the end of October. Updates on Wattpad will be the same (every Sunday or Monday)

Chapter Twenty Nine

"This is... wow," Lorenzo said, he was stunned as he ate the dinner that Roan had prepared. "Like five-star restaurant level wow."

"You know," Kingsley spoke up, "every time I eat the food you cook I regret ever breaking up with you, Ro."

"Um." Kai blinked. "Are you forgetting that I'm sitting *right* here? Me? His husband? The love of his life?"

"Yeah, and you're welcome," Kingsley smirked. "Who knows what could've been had I not broken up with him? Maybe I'd be the one with the ring on my finger."

"Don't be an idiot and eat your dinner," Roan interrupted, making Kingsley chuckle. Kai hummed in satisfaction as he dug into his food once again. Roan moved his gaze at Lorenzo, giving him a polite smile. "Thank you."

Even though Kingsley was nervous at first, he eventually started feeling comfortable with Lorenzo around him and his friends. He was still joking around, messing with Kai, and doing what he usually did with them, and Lorenzo seemed to be enjoying by the constant grin on his face.

After dinner, Roan offered Lorenzo a drink, but the other man denied it. He had to drive back home, so he was going to remain sober, but he settled for a coffee while the others drank an *experimental* cocktail that Kai attempted to make.

"This tastes like crap," Kingsley stated.

"Your face tastes like crap," Kai retorted.

"Seriously? You can't do better than a middle school comeback?" Kingsley scoffed. "And when have *you* ever tasted my face?"

"Don't need to try it to know that it stinks," Kai huffed.

"Are they both always like this?" Lorenzo asked Roan, who sighed as he looked at the two men that were still bickering.

"Like this or worse," Roan shrugged lightly.

"At least they're entertaining," Lorenzo offered Roan a sympathetic smile.

"I feel like a mother watching her sons fight over the TV remote," Roan muttered.

"Like I said... entertaining," Lorenzo laughed.

"Perks of having an idiot husband and a stupid best friend," Roan paused, realizing that the man sitting beside him was said friend's boss. "And by that I mean my incredibly intelligent and hardworking best friend."

After another thirty minutes, Lorenzo finally stood up, announcing that it was time for him to head home. Kai protested, asking him to stay a bit longer but he politely declined. He did promise to meet them again soon, now that the ice was officially broken. Roan thanked him for the wine, and Lorenzo returned the favor by complimenting his culinary skills once more.

"Give me a ride home?" Kingsley asked. Lorenzo nodded, and the two men walked out of the apartment.

"By that do you *actually* want me to drop you home or take you home with me?" Lorenzo asked once they were in the elevator, heading downstairs. His voice was low, barely above a whisper so that the elderly woman in the elevator couldn't overhear them.

"I think you know what I meant," Kingsley answered, the corner of his lips raising in a sly smirk.

Once in Lorenzo's car, both the men buckled in and were on their way to his place. Kingsley had assumed he would be sleeping on Roan and Kai's couch, so he couldn't be happier about getting to spend the night with the handsome man that he called his boss instead.

"I wasn't, like, actually flirting with Roan by the way," Kingsley said. "I just do that to mess with Kai. It's fun seeing him get all flustered."

"Don't worry," Lorenzo chuckled. "I didn't think you were being serious with that."

"Good, great, yeah," Kingsley nodded.

"I didn't know you both had history, though," Lorenzo paused. "For a second I thought he was the ex you mentioned the other night."

"No, no, that wasn't Ro," Kingsley shook his head. "Roan and I... it was just a short fling. All we did was make out and blow— I shouldn't continue this sentence, should I?"

"You probably shouldn't," Lorenzo said as he shifted uncomfortably in his seat, his eyes on the road ahead.

"Sorry," Kingsley muttered. "But my point was that we had nothing serious."

"But you did have something serious with... someone else?" Lorenzo asked. Kingsley gulped as he looked at the other man, who was still focused on the road.

"I did. Cole. We broke up when I left my hometown and moved here," Kingsley answered. "He, uh, he started dating my best friend. Well, my ex-best friend after that. Last I heard they were getting married."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Lorenzo replied. "That sounds rough."

"It's fine, it doesn't bother me as such anymore," Kingsley shrugged. He wasn't lying, he couldn't even remember the last time he even thought about Cole or Derek.

"That's good."

"What about you?"

"What about me?"

"I know you're divorced," Kingsley paused, trying to frame his words carefully before speaking up again. "But I don't know what happened with you and, uh, Audrey, was it?"

"That's correct," Lorenzo said with a nod. "It's a bit of a long story."

"You don't have to tell me if you don't want to," Kingsley continued, "but if you do feel comfortable... then I want to learn more about you."

"We, uh, we knew each other since we were kids. Grew up together. Became high school sweethearts and then..." Lorenzo stopped. His jaw clenched, and Kingsley noticed his grip on the steering wheel got tighter as he eventually continued. "She got pregnant right after we graduated. We were kids in love, and scared. So, we did what we thought was the right thing and... got married."

"Oh." Kingsley blinked, this wasn't what he was expecting at all.

"It was a small affair. Just our families, thankfully they were supportive," Lorenzo went on, "but just a few months after that... there was a miscarriage. We lost the baby."

"Lorenzo, I'm so—"

"Please don't," Lorenzo interrupted him. Kingsley nodded, even though the other man couldn't see him. "Our relationship was never the same after that. Both of us were devastated. Her more so, obviously. And I... I tried to fix things, but I think we both knew we couldn't move past what happened.

"I was already in college, and she started a few months later as well. We remained married. Held on to whatever thin threads there were left. Then I had the opportunity to study abroad, finish my degree in England, and I... I took it. I didn't want to but she said maybe some space would do us good. So, I left.

"I graduated early and when I came back... she sent me the divorce papers. She met somebody else. I didn't blame her, obviously. We both were just in denial and if meeting someone else was the final push for us to end things then I considered that a good thing. But, uh, yeah. We got divorced after that. Never spoke again until recently."

"I shouldn't have brought this up," Kingsley muttered.

"No, no," Lorenzo shook his head. "I'm glad you did. It feels... it feels like a weight is off my shoulders. I can't remember the last time I told somebody all of this."

"Enzo..."

"And I'm glad the person I told is you," Lorenzo finally turned to glance at Kingsley, passing him a small but soft smile.

Kingsley couldn't help but frown, however. Whereas Lorenzo was opening himself up, telling him things that weren't for everyone to know... Kingsley still had secrets. Secrets that were directly linked to the other man.

Guilt was eating Kingsley up more and more as each second passed. The longer he waited, the more it increased, but so did the fear of ruining what he had with Lorenzo. He was between a rock and a hard place, and he knew he was going to have to bite the bullet sooner or later. But until then... he wanted to enjoy what he had with Lorenzo.

"My mom hates Audrey, even though I keep reminding her nothing that happened was her fault and it was just a messed up situation. If anything then I was the one that handled it badly and left when I should've stayed."

"You said it yourself, she asked you to go and your relationship was already past saving at the point. It's not your fault either, Lorenzo," Kingsley replied.

"That's what my brother said too," Lorenzo muttered.

"I didn't know you had any siblings," Kingsley pointed out, making Lorenzo finally chuckle.

"I have four. And guess what? I'm the middle child. Two elder brothers, one younger and one baby sister," Lorenzo answered.

"Any of them here in New York?" Kingsley asked.

"Nah," Lorenzo shook his head. "One of them is in Chicago, he's an architect. Younger one is in college now. My eldest brother, Javi, is still back home, he's probably gonna take over the family store. Baby sis is at home too, she's in high school."

"Family store?"

"Yeah," Lorenzo said with a nod, a smile on his face as he recalled home. "My parents own a hardware store. I spent like... all of my teenage weekends working there. I keep telling my parents to sell it now. I got them a bigger house and set up a retirement fund so that they can relax now but... nope. They still run it. From the looks of it, Javi will probably take over it once they do sit back."

"I knew you had humble beginnings but... wow."

Kingsley was stunned. He knew Lorenzo built his business from the ground up, but hearing about his family and his childhood just made him feel more in awe of the man.

"Enough about me," Lorenzo spoke up suddenly, pulling Kingsley away from his thoughts. "I want to know more about you."

"What do you want to know?" Kingsley asked, his voice sounding a little nervous, and he hoped Lorenzo wouldn't notice it.

"You. Your childhood. Your family. I already know about your friends and your work so... who is Reece Kingsley aside from that?"

***

S tart of the month early update!

Chapter 35 is up on Patreon. Link in bio. I plan on finishing King's Guard on Patreon in October, so this month is the best time to pledge!

Chapter Thirty

"Who is Reece Kingsley..." Kingsley muttered, repeating Lorenzo's question.

"Tell me."

"Well, it's not a very interesting story," Kingsley finally spoke. "My parents were never married. Or even together for that matter. I was the product of a one-night stand. They dumped me with my grandparents in their ancestral home once I was born. My grandparents were the ones that raised me. Initially.

"My father visited once in a while. Sometimes for birthdays and Christmas. My grandma, uh, she passed away when I was fourteen. Cancer. Grandpa passed away a few months later. Probably depression from losing his wife. They were together since they were eighteen. They really loved each other."

"I'm sorry."

"It's okay," Kingsley said. "After that it was just nannies or some other person that my parents hired to look after me. Until I turned eighteen. Then I moved out. Moved here. And that's about it."

Kingsley shrugged once he was done talking, his face completely devoid of emotions. Lorenzo kept glancing at him every couple minutes, a soft frown on his face. He had no idea that Kingsley grew up with absent parents, and the fact that he was talking about it so casually worried him.

"Do you still talk to your parents? I remember you mentioning something about your father the other day." Lorenzo pointed out.

"I haven't spoken to my mother in maybe five years now. Heck, I think I can count on one hand the amount of times I've physically met her in my entire life," Kingsley scoffed. "My dad... he's somewhat better in this

regard. He apologized recently and we've been... we've been trying to build a relationship."

"Better late than never," Lorenzo said as he finally pulled into the parking lot of his building. "But this... this sounds rough. Not having your parents around—"

"Going to parent teacher conferences in school sucked, so did shadow your parent for a day assignments but other than that I was fine," Kingsley shrugged. "My mee-maw? She was epic. I was happy growing up, despite the crap with my parents. So, don't worry."

Lorenzo parked, before turning off the ignition and unbuckling his seat belt. He turned to face Kingsley, who had just gotten done removing his belt as well. Lorenzo was at a loss for words, he grew up in a big and happy family, so hearing Kingsley's story made his heart ache for the other man. All he wanted was to make things better for Kingsley. To make him happy.

"I'm glad," Lorenzo smiled, rather forcefully, before pressing his lips in a thin line as if he was keeping himself from saying something. Kingsley raised a brow in question. "This is probably not the right time to be asking this but... did you think about what I asked you? About going to San Francisco with me?"

Kingsley licked his lower lip as he stared at Lorenzo, who looked nervous due to the anticipation of Kingsley's answer.

Kingsley did think about it. But he also didn't. He made a list in his head with the pros and cons, and when he got frustrated he pretended like Lorenzo never asked him the question. But ignoring it didn't make it go away, and he knew he had to give an answer soon. And the soon seemed to have arrived quicker than he thought.

There were a lot of things to consider. And Kingsley tried to calculate them all. But now that he was sitting in front of Lorenzo, with the other man waiting eagerly for his answer- the only thing that Kingsley could think about was whether he wanted to go with Lorenzo or not. Whether he wanted to be with him or if he wanted to spend four days alone?

"Yes," Kingsley said.

"Yes?" Lorenzo's eyebrows shot up in surprise, as if he was expecting Kingsley to deny.

"Yeah, why not?" Kingsley shrugged, trying to play it cool. "It's a free vacation."

"You know that you're expected to work there and attend conferences with me, right?" The corner of Lorenzo's lips raised in a smirk.

"As long as I get off at five..." Kingsley leaned forward to grab hold of Lorenzo's collar, his thumb caressing the man's neck as he spoke. "And then have you with me for the rest of the night, I can manage to do a little work."

"Reece..." Lorenzo's voice was soft, and his arousal was clear. "God, you don't know what you do to me."

"And what is that?" Kingsley whispered, his eyes drifting down to Lorenzo's lips and his fingers trailing to the back of the other man's neck, playing with his hair.

"I want to take you home with me. I want you in my bed. Next to me and..." Lorenzo leaned forward, putting his hand on Kingsley's cheek. "And never let you go."

"Never?"

" *Never* ," Lorenzo repeated.

"Sure you won't get sick of me? That's an awfully long amount of time," Kingsley said.

"Still not long enough," Lorenzo replied, his thumb stroking Kingsley's cheek, their lips just inches away.

"Enzo, I... I need to talk to you about something." For the first time, there was a trace of fear in Kingsley's voice.

"What is it, *mi cielo* ?" Lorenzo asked.

"Mi..."

"My heaven," Lorenzo translated.

Kingsley's breath hitched as he looked into Lorenzo's eyes, there was nothing but sincerity and affection on his face. Kingsley's throat felt dry, he had to tell Lorenzo the truth, but at the same time he didn't want to mess things up with him. At first, he was afraid of getting attached to the other man, and now he was terrified of losing him.

"Can we go upstairs first?" Kingsley asked. He didn't really want to have this conversation in Lorenzo's car in the dim basement parking.

"Let's go."

"Okay."

Lorenzo pecked Kingsley's lips softly, before finally moving back and opening his car door. The two men got out, and took the elevator up to Lorenzo's floor.

"I'm thinking of getting the penthouse," Lorenzo said once they were in the elevator.

"Nobody lives there?" Kingsley asked.

"Callum Kaufman used to, but it's empty now and I think they might put it on sale," Lorenzo shrugged. "Will be a good investment."

"Right," Kingsley nodded, not really caring about what Lorenzo was saying. He had bigger fish to fry at the moment.

As soon as they got inside Lorenzo's apartment, the older man sighed tiredly and started unbuttoning his shirt, attempting to relax now that they were home.

"Uh, so—"

Kingsley had barely gotten a word out when Lorenzo's phone started ringing. The man took it out of his pocket, a soft smile on his face. He showed Kingsley the screen, and Kingsley nodded, trying to return the smile, though it didn't come off as geniune as he wanted to.

" *Hola mamá* ," Lorenzo grinned as he picked up the call.

"I'm gonna go freshen up," Kingsley muttered before going to Lorenzo's bedroom, leaving the man alone to talk to his mom.

After spending quite a few nights at Lorenzo's, Kingsley had left a couple of clothes there. It was Lorenzo's idea, he claimed this would make it easier for Kingsley and he wouldn't have to carry a spare pair every time he came over. He went to the bathroom, and washed his face. He stared at himself in the mirror, trying to find the courage to come clean.

A few minutes later, he went back to the living room, and Lorenzo was still on call. He was talking in Spanish, so Kingsley couldn't exactly understand what he was saying.

" *Estoy tan feliz por él, te veré en December* ," Lorenzo said. Kingsley walked over to the mini bar in the living room, pouring some whiskey for both of them.

He handed it to Lorenzo, who mouthed a ' *thank you* '. Kingsley sat down next to Lorenzo on the couch, quietly drinking as he waited for him to be done. Finally, after a couple more minutes, Lorenzo said his goodbyes and hung up the call.

"What's up?" Kingsley asked when he saw the massive grin on Lorenzo's face.

"Javi proposed to his girlfriend and she said yes," Lorenzo answered. "My brother's getting married."

"Oh!" Kingsley blinked. "That's great."

"We've all been waiting so long for him to do it. He's been dating Rose since college and they're thirty-three now," Lorenzo chuckled. "Finally grew some balls."

"Better late than never," Kingsley repeated Lorenzo's words from earlier.

"Do you mind if I give him a call? I need to congratulate him," Lorenzo asked. "And also curse him out for not telling me himself and letting mamá do it."

"Go ahead," Kingsley replied, pressing his lips in a thin line to give him a smile.

"Wait," Lorenzo said as he furrowed his brows. "You wanted to talk to me about something, right?"

"It's nothing that can't wait," Kingsley shook his head dismissively. "Go speak to your brother."

"Are you sure? I can call him later—"

"I'm sure," Kingsley reassured the other man with a smile on his face. Lorenzo looked a little unsure, but finally nodded.

Lorenzo kissed Kingsley's temple, before looking at his phone again to call his brother and standing up to go to the balcony to talk. Kingsley sighed, slumping back into the couch. He obviously couldn't tell Lorenzo now. Not when he had just gotten such good news.

The truth was going to have to wait.

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C

h apter 36 is up on Patreon! Reminder that I'm updating King's Guard on Patreon more frequently so to finish it in October, so now's the best time to subscribe!

Chapter Thirty One

"Don't turn around, and don't get alarmed," Roan said, looking down at his coffee. Kingsley furrowed his brows with confusion, wondering what Roan was on about. "But I think there's someone following you."

"What?" Kingsley asked, the shock clear in his voice. Roan nodded, tilting his head up to look at his friend, a blank expression on his face so as to not give away anything.

"There's this guy sitting a few tables behind us. I'm pretty sure I saw him at the mall too. And then outside the dry cleaners," Roan explained.

It was Sunday, and Kai was out for the day meeting some of his old friends from college. Roan and Kingsley spent the entire day running errands and getting some other work done. They were at a café, sitting down for coffee when Roan finally figured that there was something sketchy going on.

Kingsley faked a yawn and stretched his arms and neck to look back. He was trying to be subtle but wanted to get a look at the man that Roan thought was stalking them.

He was a little older, maybe in his mid or early thirties, with a scruffy beard, and was wearing a baseball hat. Kingsley tried to recall if he knew him, but as far as he could tell he had never seen him in his life. He was looking towards the two men, and immediately looked down at his newspaper when he saw Kingsley's head turn.

"Are you sure?" Kingsley asked. "It could just be a coincidence."

"Could be. But I always say three is a pattern and I've noticed him staring and following us," Roan answered. "And he has a camera."

"How do you know he's stalking me and not you?" Kingsley rose a brow.

"Come on," Roan deadpanned. "Out of the two of us, who's more likely to have a stalker? Besides, does it even really matter?"

"Fair enough," Kingsley muttered. "What should we do?"

"Call 911?" Roan replied like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

"We don't even know for sure if he's stalking either of us," Kingsley frowned softly. "I have a plan."

"If it's something stupid—"

"Just follow me and act casual, okay?" Kingsley said as he got up, dropping a hundred on the table which was more than enough to cover the bill and the tip.

Roan sighed, knowing for sure that Kingsley was going to do something idiotic, but he followed him nonetheless. Both of them walked out of the café, and lo and behold, they were indeed being followed by said man in the baseball hat.

Kingsley leaned towards Roan, quickly telling him what he had in mind. Roan once again told him it would be better to just call the cops, but Kingsley said no. They were nearing a corner, and Kingsley knew there was an alley right ahead of it. As soon as they turned, they went into the alley.

A couple of minutes later, the stalker stumbled in front of the alley, looking confused as he wondered whether he lost the two men. Kingsley cleared his throat from behind him, and he finally turned around to face them.

"Fuck," he muttered, realizing he had been caught. He was about to turn and possibly run away, but Kingsley spoke up before he could.

"Run and I call the cops," Kingsley raised his phone, 911 was already on the screen, he was just waiting to press the call button.

"And I've got your face on camera," the man turned to face Roan, who was holding his phone up as well.

"What do you want?" The man asked.

"What do I— You're the one stalking me!" Kingsley scoffed. "What the fuck do *you* want?"

"I'm not stalking you," he replied.

"I'm sure the pictures in your camera would state otherwise," Roan pitched in, it was just a bluff, but Roan's blank expression made him a great poker player. "Either you tell us or we call the cops and they'll check what you got in there. And I have a feeling that you wouldn't want them to."

"Uh..." he was beginning to look nervous now, as he grabbed onto the camera that was hanging around his neck. It wasn't a cheap one, but an actual professional camera.

"I'm not very patient," Kingsley subtly threatened.

"Look," he sighed. "I'm not a stalker, okay? I'm a journalist."

"Why are you following me, then?" Kingsley asked.

"I... I was in Gianni Russo's office a few months back. I had an interview scheduled with him when I saw you go into his office. Something just... seemed off so I tried to do a little digging. Found out you didn't work at Russo's and um, so you know how private he is about his personal life, right? I didn't get anything of value from the interview—"

"He's private about it because it's *his personal* life, asshole," Kingsley interrupted. Roan kept his hand on his friend's shoulder as if telling him to let the man talk.

"Anyway, uh, I just wanted to get some dirt on him. And then I saw him have dinner with you a few days later and I... I thought maybe you were like his sugar baby or something."

"Fucking gross!" Kingsley exclaimed, the disgust visible on his face.

"What? It was possible," he shrugged. "But I didn't have proof so I started following you. You had an entry-level job but a freaking penthouse downtown and a half a million dollar car so that was the only thing that made sense!"

"Continue," Roan said.

"Then a few days ago I saw you and Lorenzo Salazar getting down and dirty and—"

"You what!?" Kingsley yelled, taking a step towards the so-called journalist, who took a step back in fear. Roan grabbed Kingsley's elbow, holding him back. "Where?"

"Back alley of a club."

"Fuck," Kingsley mumbled.

He had gone out with his co-workers a few days ago, and he and Lorenzo may or may not have snuck outside to make out. Those two had been very careful in the start, but as time passed, they were getting a bit lax. And it seemed like it finally bit them in the ass.

"Keep talking," Roan said.

"I, uh, that just confused me and I thought you were sleeping with all these rich businessmen. Maybe you were a high-end escort? I figured this would be the exposé of the year. So, I may have been following you to see what else... who else you're involved with," he muttered, finally finishing his story.

"I can't believe this shit," Kingsley said, blinking. This was not how he expected his day would go.

"Stay here. Don't move," Roan's voice was stern as he ordered the journalist, who simply nodded weakly. Roan pulled Kingsley aside so that he could keep an eye on the other man to make sure he didn't run away, but also so that he couldn't overhear them. "What do you want to do?"

"I would've... I would've called the cops had this been just about my father and I but... he knows about Lorenzo," Kingsley frowned. "And I'm pretty sure he has pictures... I can't— I can't let that get out. It would destroy Lorenzo's life and career. He could lose everything, Roan."

"No cops, then," Roan nodded. "What other option do we have? Pay him off?"

Kingsley didn't reply, as he tilted his head to look at the nervous journalist. He pressed his lips in a thin line, thinking about what possible courses of action he had. And there was only one thing that made the most sense.

"Make sure he doesn't leave," Kingsley told Roan, who raised an eyebrow in question.

Kingsley moved aside, pulling his phone out of his pocket and dialing the number of the only person who could help them out.

"Dad?" Kingsley said as Gianni picked up. "Dad... I need help."

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Kingsley and Roan were in the waiting area outside Gianni Russo's office. Kingsley was picking at his nails, and tapping his foot rapidly as he watched the clock tick. Roan sighed but didn't say anything. After what felt like hours, but was barely a few minutes. Gianni came out of his office.

"Is it done?" Kingsley jumped to his feet, asking. Gianni looked a little wary as he glanced at the unfamiliar blond man beside his son. Kingsley noticed. "This is my best friend."

"Roan MacElroy," he brought his hand forward for the older man to shake. "Nice to meet you, Mr. Russo."

"Pleasure," Gianni nodded.

"I'll go get myself some water," Roan said, realizing he should leave the father and son alone to talk. Both of them nodded, and he left.
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"Let's go to my office," Gianni muttered.

Kingsley followed his father inside his massive office, and both of them took a seat on the couch. Gianni poured them both some scotch, placing the glass in front of his son.

"So?"

"I paid him hush money. Got rid of all the copies of the pictures and his hard drive. He also signed a non-disclosure agreement so he cannot utter a word of what he knows... or thinks he knows without being sued for every penny he has," Gianni said, and Kingsley finally breathed in relief.

"Thank you," he whispered. "And I'm sorry."

"You have no reason to be," Gianni sighed. "He only started following you because of me. And this is not the first reporter I've had to pay to keep quiet. It's... all a part of this life."

"I guess I understand why you try so hard to keep me away from it, then," Kingsley replied.

"Rest assured, you don't need to worry about him. He will also inform me just in case there's any other reporter that takes an interest in you for whatsoever reasons," Gianni said.

"Uh, about the pictures... I don't know if you saw—"

"Your personal life is none of my business, Reece," Gianni said. "I want it to be, but only if you're the one sharing it with me. I do not want to know about it from the lens of the media."

"Right," Kingsley nodded. "Thank you."

"Whatever you need... I'm here for you, son."

Kingsley stared out the window as Roan drove him home. It had been a rather eventful day, full of stress as well. He was grateful for his friend, who was thankfully perspective enough of his surroundings to notice that they

were being followed. Kingsley had failed to notice it for weeks. If it hadn't been for Roan... both Kingsley and Lorenzo's lives would've been ruined.

Kingsley kept stalling having to tell Lorenzo the truth. But now that they were so close to being exposed to the world... it was finally time for him to come clean. Kingsley could no longer in good conscience keep the other man in the dark.

"Can you drop me at Lorenzo's instead?"

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Chapter 37 is up on Patreon! Link in bio.

Chapter Thirty Two

"Reece?" Lorenzo looked confused as he stared at a nervous Kingsley, who was standing outside his door, his fingers enclosed in a fist, and his nails digging into his palm.

"Sorry for, uh, showing up like this. Unannounced," Kingsley said, looking anywhere but at Lorenzo.

"Are you okay? You look... you don't look too well," Lorenzo frowned.

"No," Kingsley answered truthfully as he shook his head. "I'm not okay."

"Hey," Lorenzo said softly, holding Kingsley's hand. "Come inside."

Lorenzo didn't let go of Kingsley's hand as they walked into his living room. He held onto it even when they sat down, but Kingsley nervously pulled it away, making Lorenzo's frown grow even deeper.

"Remember how I said that I wanted to talk to you about something Friday night?" Kingsley asked.

"Yes, what about it? You said it wasn't anything important," Lorenzo recalled.

"I lied," Kingsley said.

"Huh?"

"There are some things that you don't know... about me... Jesus, I don't even know where to begin," Kingsley let out a frustrated sigh as he rubbed his face with his hand.

"Hey," Lorenzo kept his hand on Kingsley's thigh reassuringly. "Whatever it is, you can tell me. It's okay. Just start from the beginning, yeah?"

"From the beginning," Kingsley muttered. "Okay."

"Okay, go on."

"Remember when I told you about my parents?" Kingsley asked, and Lorenzo nodded. "What I didn't mention was that they're rich. Like really fucking rich. One percent... the type to eat dinner with the President rich."

"Okay..." Lorenzo furrowed his brows. "Why were you so nervous about this? I mean, it's not that big of—"

"My father is Gianni Russo," Kingsley ripped the band-aid.

At first, Lorenzo just looked puzzled, wondering why his father's name mattered. It took him a few seconds to connect the dots, and his eyes widened with surprise as he finally realized what this meant.

"The last-minute investor..."

"Was me," Kingsley admitted.

When Lorenzo stayed quiet, Kingsley finally gathered the courage to be able to look at him. Lorenzo's face was blank apart from a slight frown, it was as if the weight of what Kingsley told him was still sinking in, and he was trying to decipher what it meant.

"Why?" was all Lorenzo asked. His jaw was tightened, and Kingsley could see and feel the tension on his face and in the air around them.

"Because I believed in you, and I... I just couldn't see you lose your company. After working with you... I knew how much it meant to you. It meant everything, and I had the resources to prevent someone else from taking over so... I did it," Kingsley explained. "It wasn't because I wanted to sleep with you or some shit like that. I mean, I did, but I invested solely because I believe in you and the work that we do."

"I meant... why didn't you just tell me? Why has it taken you so long to come clean?" Lorenzo elaborated.

"I was... scared," Kingsley admitted.

"Scared?" Lorenzo glanced at the other man, raising a questioning brow. "Scared of what?"

"Different things at different points of time," Kingsley sighed. "At first, I didn't think it mattered. I mean, you were just my boss. And then we became friends and I... I didn't want you to, I don't know, feel insecure about anything. It was dumb, I know, but I knew it would unnecessarily complicate our... relationship.

"And then things started... developing with us and the longer I kept the truth from you, the scarier it became to come clean. I didn't... I don't want to lose you over what I did. I know I should've told you that very instant, but you were just so happy and I thought if you knew the money came from me you wouldn't... that you'd think you failed or I did you charity. Which I didn't. Not at all.

"Even when we started sleeping together, I never thought it'd be anything more than that. But it was. It is. And once I actually realized how much you mean to me... I became scared again. This time because I didn't... I don't want to mess up whatever it is that we have."

"Reece, I— I don't know what to say," Lorenzo muttered.

"I don't know if you know this but I'm not... I'm not used to, or good at... this," Kingsley said, pointing between him and Lorenzo, making the other man let out a dry chuckle.

"I've noticed," Lorenzo muttered.

"I just figured ignorance was bliss until we reached a point where it wasn't just some harmless truth that I kept from you, but a blatant lie about who I was and what I'd done," Kingsley stated. "Are you angry?"

"Angry? No, I don't think so," Lorenzo exhaled deeply, leaning back on the couch. "I don't know how I feel about this. Not yet. At first, I thought you

had cheated on me, then I realized we're not even... exclusive in that sense. But this, I never expected this. So I don't know what to think."

"I really only did it because I wanted the best for the company, and the best for it is you," Kingsley reiterated.

"I believe you," Lorenzo nodded. Kingsley breathed out in relief at how well Lorenzo was taking all of this. "I believe that you didn't have any ill intention, I mean, you invested millions in me and never even wanted me to know. That's... yeah, that's faith alright."

"Now that this is all out in the open," Kingsley looked away once again. Now came the more... dangerous news. "I have something else to tell you as well."

"What is it? Don't tell me your mom is the—"

"A man was stalking me," Kingsley interrupted.

"What?" Lorenzo was immediately alarmed as he sat up straight, turning to face Kingsley. "Are you okay? He didn't hurt you, right? Did you call the police?"

"I'm fine, I'm fine," Kingsley cut off his rambling. "He didn't hurt me, and I didn't call the cops. My dad took care of him."

"Took care of him?" Lorenzo furrowed his brows.

"Not in that way," Kingsley's eyes widened. "He was a journalist. He saw me at my dad's office and had been following me for... months now. My dad just paid him off and made him sign an NDA."

"A journalist?" Lorenzo was confused yet again.

"He thought I was a secret escort or part of some high-end conspiracy," Kingsley muttered.

"Don't tell me he thought you were sleeping with your—"

"Yep."

"That's really messed up," Lorenzo was still in disbelief. Both of them stayed quiet as Kingsley tried to figure out how to tell Lorenzo the next part, but he figured it out himself. "Wait, if he had been following you for months then that means..."

"He saw us," Kingsley nodded. "And had pictures of us. It's all been deleted and as I said, he sighed an NDA so he can't tell anyone."

"Fuck," Lorenzo swore. He was in shock. "If you didn't... if he had published it before you found out... it would've been—"

"A huge scandal," Kingsley finished his sentence.

"The board would've fired me," Lorenzo whispered. "If it had gotten out that I was sleeping with an employee... my life would be over."

It was at that moment that it hit Lorenzo that he had been playing with fire. That he was being utterly careless and risking what he had spent years building. He could've lost everything he had. Kingsley and Lorenzo had gotten away with it for so long, that they had stopped being as careful. The thrill of it all was making them even more reckless.

Sure, it had its moments and was arousing. But this was enough to make Lorenzo come crashing down to the real world. Reality would not forgive or look away from him for sleeping with a subordinate. He had seen several people, even ones more successful than him, go down because of this very reason. And he was so close to joining them.

"We can't do this anymore," Lorenzo stated.

"Enzo?" Kingsley couldn't believe it. His worst fear had come true. "Come on, I... I took care of it, okay? It'll be fine."

"You took care of this one, Reece. There's going to be more and... and not even just journalists. If one wrong person finds out about us then I'm going to lose everything," Lorenzo said. "You don't know what it's like to make

your dream actually come true. To spend so much time and sweat on something. My company... it's everything to me."

"I understand, and I want nothing but the best for you—"

"No, you don't understand!" Lorenzo snapped. "You've been handed everything your whole life. You don't know what it's like to work this hard for something."

Kingsley was taken aback by Lorenzo's sudden outburst. This judgment was what he was afraid of, it was why he kept a low profile, and it seemed like all of his fears were coming true at once. Kingsley didn't know what to feel at Lorenzo's words. Sad. Disappointed. Hurt. Angry.

At that moment Kingsley knew Lorenzo would never see him the same way again.

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c hapter 40 (also the longest chapter I've ever written) is now up on patreon!

Chapter Thirty Three

"Look, I'm sorry," Lorenzo sighed, once he realized what he had just implied. "I didn't mean it that way."

"Yes. Yes, you did," Kingsley's voice was cold.

After Lorenzo said he wanted to stop, Kingsley was ready to beg him to not end things. Something he had never done before. Not even when Cole broke up with him. But for Lorenzo, he was ready to not only keep his pride, but his self-respect aside.

But Lorenzo's last words cut through him like a knife. To diminish and belittle everything that Kingsley had ever done... this was something he never expected to hear from the other man. And he couldn't let that slide, either.

"I'm really fucking sorry for keeping some things from you, but you got into this with me fully knowing that it could get you into trouble," Kingsley said. "I'm not the only one to blame for this."

"I know," Lorenzo replied. "I was blind and stupid, but now that... that the danger of it all is clear to me. That I've been basically given a second chance. I can't risk it all again."

"Okay," Kingsley said as he got up, ready to leave.

"That's it? You're leaving?" Lorenzo frowned.

"What? You expect me to cry and beg?" Kingsley scoffed. "Do you think I'm some daddy's spoiled little rich boy who will throw a tantrum if he doesn't get what he wants?"

"Reece," Lorenzo sighed as he stood up as well, taking a step towards the other man. "I apologize for what I said."

"Don't," Kingsley snatched his arm away when Lorenzo tried to touch him.

"Fine, be like that," Lorenzo snapped. "If it hadn't been for who you are, then you wouldn't have a journalist following you around and clicking our pictures."

"It could've been anyone!" Kingsley said in disbelief.

"But you... being who are you makes the chances of us getting exposed even higher."

"You want to dive into hypotheticals with me?" Kingsley rose a challenging brow, making Lorenzo roll his eyes. "If I wasn't who I am, then you wouldn't have your fucking job anymore. You wouldn't have anything to protect in the first place."

"Wow," Lorenzo let out a dry laugh as he turned away, no longer facing the other man. "You should leave."

"I was about to when *you* stopped me," Kingsley retorted.

"We're both angry and we're already saying things we'll regret tomorrow," Lorenzo said. "We need some space."

"You can have all the space you want. I'm out of here," Kingsley replied, his voice and face both devoid of any emotion. He turned around and took a few steps towards the door when Lorenzo called out his name once again.

"Reece..." Lorenzo sighed. Kingsley stopped in his steps.

A part of him desperately wanted Lorenzo to stop him. To tell him that everything was okay. That they were okay. His heartbeat grew faster as he tilted his head, looking at Lorenzo from the corner of his eye to see what he had to say. Despite the hurt and the anger, his mind was constantly chanting the same words over and over again.

Please don't let me leave. Please ask me to stay. Please.

"What?" Kingsley asked.

"About the conference in San Francisco... I'll be requesting Anwar to accompany me instead," Lorenzo answered.

Kingsley let out a dry chuckle. Of course, even after the conversation they just had, Lorenzo still cared more about some stupid meeting.

"Sure, *sir* ," the bitterness in Kingsley's voice and tone wasn't masked in the slightest.

As Kingsley left Lorenzo's place and walked out of the building, he felt lost. He didn't know what to do next or where to go. The last place he wanted to go to was his penthouse, his cold and empty apartment that never felt like home in the five years that he had lived there.

He had gotten so used to Lorenzo and being with him, that without the option to go there... he just couldn't figure out where he belonged, if anywhere. Kingsley sat down on the sidewalk, watching people walk by him. Some didn't even acknowledge his presence, and the ones that did threw him a dirty look.

Kingsley felt numb. He didn't even know how long he sat there until the security guard of the building he was sitting in front of him asked him to leave. Kingsley didn't protest and got up without a word as he started walking in the opposite direction of his penthouse.

Kingsley ended up in a bar. One of the places he often frequented when he was in the market and looking to hook up. A place he hadn't been to in months now. Not since the first day he worked late with Lorenzo.

"The King in the house," the bartender, Ian, said as soon as he saw Kingsley taking a seat on one of the bar stools. "It's been a while, I was wondering what the hell happened to you."

"Just been busy with work," Kingsley replied, a half-truth.

"You do look burnt out," Ian noted as he hummed softly. "Alright, so what's your poison tonight?"

"Get me whatever fucks me up. Your pick."

As soon as Ian placed the glass in front of Kingsley, the man downed it in a single go, before pushing it back towards the bartender. Ian chuckled as he filled it up again.

"Just give me the damn bottle," Kingsley said after a while. Ian looked concerned at that, but didn't say anything and obliged.

Kingsley looked like a mess as he sat at the counter and had one drink after the other until he got rid of the glass and started drinking straight from the bottle. Ian kept glancing at Kingsley, worried, but didn't say anything as at least Kingsley was behaving.

The bar was nearly full, so the bartender had other people to focus on as well. Sometime later, he walked over to Kingsley to check on him again, only to notice that he had finished three-quarters of the bottle. His eyes were blood red, and he was clutching onto the bottle for dear life.

"Alright, I'm cutting you off now," Ian said as he tried to take the bottle away from Kingsley, who wouldn't let it go.

"No," Kingsley replied as he tried to pull it back.

"Don't make me throw you out," Ian warned.

"How about you take me home instead?" Kingsley's voice was slurred as he tried to smile at Ian, failing miserably at that. "I'll let you fuck me this time."

"I would take you up on this offer any other day but... not when you're in this state," Ian frowned. "Just give me the bottle and tell me who to call to pick you up."

"I'll get a cab," Kingsley muttered as he tried to get up, but ended up tripping and hitting his knee. "Fuck..."

"Yeah, no," Ian said as he walked around the bar to help Kingsley up. "You're not going home alone like this."

"Maybe you could take me then," Kingsley tried to flirt once again. He desperately needed someone to make him forget everything.

"My shift doesn't end until 4," Ian replied. "Just tell me who to call."

"Fine," Kingsley grumbled, seeming like a little kid upset about not getting what he wanted. He took his phone out of his pocket, unlocking it as he handed it over to Ian before sitting back on the stool. "Roan."

Ian nodded as he tried to find the contact. Kingsley rested his head on the counter, everything felt like it was spinning and Kingsley could no longer see or think straight. He couldn't even keep his eyes open and listen in to what Ian was saying to Roan over call.

"He'll be here in thirty," Ian said as he kept a hand on Kingsley's shoulder. "I'll take you to the back and you can take a nap in the employee's lounge, okay?"

"Uh-huh," was all Kingsley could manage to say as Ian helped him get up and took him to the backroom. Kingsley nearly fell on the couch, and instantly passed out as his head hit the cushion. Ian sighed tiredly at the man, before shaking his head and going back to work.

Kingsley didn't know when Roan reached or how he got back to his friend's place. He was too out of it to recall anything the next morning when he woke up in Roan and Kai's guest room which he was very familiar with. He felt some relief wash over him, as all he remembered from the night before was drinking non-stop until he passed out. He was glad that he was safe and not unconscious in some ditch.

He checked his phone, and it was way past noon. It was also a Monday, which meant he pretty much missed work. Not like he cared much about it after the events of last night. He hadn't even thought of how he'd show his face in the office again. Seeing Lorenzo would be... Kingsley shook his head, trying now to focus on that for now.

He got out of bed and walked outside to the kitchen. He called out Roan and Kai's names but was only met with silence, so he figured they were

both at work. His eyes fell on a bright yellow post-it on the refrigerator, and he walked towards it.

Kai and I are at work. There's some lasagna in the fridge, heat it up. Feel free to stay as long as you want.

Kingsley sighed as he went back to the guest room, and got into the bed again. Just the thought of food made him sick to his stomach. He grabbed his phone, quickly writing an email to H.R stating that he was taking a couple of sick days off from work, before going back to sleep.

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double update this week because... why not?

chapter 41 is up on patreon! I can't believe King's Guard is so close to ending ;-; which will mark the end of the Tense series— brb crying now

Chapter Thirty Four

Kingsley was going to swear off of alcohol.

Even after a day, he felt dizzy, and the heaviness in his head hadn't decreased a bit. He was still at Roan's apartment, he was about to leave the night before, but seeing the state that he was in— the husbands didn't let him.

Kingsley had no clue what the next step would be. Was he supposed to go to work and pretend that nothing ever happened between him and Lorenzo? Was he supposed to put up a façade once again? Was Lorenzo going to do the same? The thought of Lorenzo acting like the two of them were nothing but colleagues sent a sharp pain in Kingsley's chest. He couldn't go back to being just that, not anymore.

He wanted to talk to him, to sort out their problems but he didn't know what to say. Lorenzo had so clearly stated that he wanted to stop whatever was going on between them, and for a valid reason that Kingsley couldn't even blame him for. That didn't mean that it didn't hurt, though. He wasn't mad at Lorenzo for wanting to put a stop to them being together, he understood where the man was coming from. The last thing Kingsley wanted was for Lorenzo to get fired.

But the thing that made him angry was when Lorenzo said Kingsley didn't know what it was like to work hard for something. Kingsley was aware that he was extremely privileged, but that did not mean he sat on his ass all day. He had been working an entry-level job for a year, not because he had to, but because he wanted to. And that counted. He was more than what was in his or his parents' bank balance. And he was still hurt by Lorenzo belittling him like that.

Kingsley didn't have the strength nor the motivation to get out of bed. He stayed in there until Kai got back from work. All Kingsley did was stare at the walls or the ceiling and blame himself for breaking the one rule that he

had. For getting attached to a man after what had happened with his ex. For years, he had stayed behind his walls with his guard up, and the one time he didn't... Well, not like it mattered anymore. It was too late.

He was right. Everything ends. And he was heartbroken all over again. Kingsley didn't even know how or when his feelings for Lorenzo grew so strong. All he wanted was to just sleep with him. No strings attached whatsoever. But now there he was... lying in bed, depressed, wondering how he was going to pull himself out of this pit that he had dug with his own two hands.

"Kingsley?" Kai called out as he opened the door after knocking twice. Kingsley just grunted in response. "Have you eaten anything?"

"No," Kingsley muttered.

"Dude, come on," Kai frowned. "You haven't eaten in... almost two days now. And you usually devour our fridge when you stay over."

"I'm not hungry," Kingsley replied. He knew he was acting bratty, but he couldn't care less about that.

"Alright, time to stop being a little bitch," Kai said sternly as he folded his arms in front of his chest. "I'll make you some grilled cheese sandwiches, okay? And you're going to eat them."

"Or what?"

"Or I'm going to tell Roan that you were the one that spilled wine over his favorite shirt last new year," Kai threatened.

"How did you— alright, I'm getting up," Kingsley sighed.

"And take a shower, please? You stink," Kai said, scrunching up his nose.

Kingsley sat up on the bed, and he raised his arm to smell himself, gagging as he realized that Kai was right. Kingsley had to pull himself together, he wasn't the type to go into a shell or be a mess. He was strong, the kind to stand tall even in the face of heartbreak. So, then why did he not *feel*

strong? Why did he feel like nothing mattered anymore? Kingsley hated himself for having such thoughts, for being a drama queen. But he simply couldn't help it.

Lorenzo's hold on him was tight. More powerful than he ever could've imagined. And now he was paying the price of giving into his emotions and letting himself fall for someone once again. He should've learned from his mistakes, but he didn't, and now he could only feel pain and regret.

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It was now Wednesday, and Kingsley was back at work. He didn't know how he got himself out of bed and into his car, but he did. This was his first time driving his Rolls Royce to work. Kingsley walked into the office with his head held high, and sunglasses to hide the bags underneath his eyes. Despite spending the last two days under a blanket, he barely got any sleep.

Lorenzo was going to be leaving for San Francisco on Thursday, which meant there was a good chance that they were going to run into each other. Luckily, Kingsley didn't have any meetings scheduled with just him for the day.

Though there was one meeting with the entire team, which Kingsley wasn't looking forward to. He already had a bunch of work piled up due to the 'sick days' that he took. Kingsley went straight to his cubicle and dove into work. He was almost robotic as he nonstop typed on his laptop. He didn't even leave for lunch, and Miles brought him some coffee, which Kingsley was thankful for. He desperately needed caffeine to get through the day.

Even though Kingsley tried to hide it, it was crystal clear that he wasn't okay. When Nina asked, he just told her that he was still pretty low after falling sick and that there was nothing else wrong. A huge lie, which Nina seemed to have bought, considering no one had any clue about Kingsley's personal life. He wasn't one to show emotions, so nobody expected them from him either.

"Maybe you caught the same bug as Mr. Salazar," Nina said, making Kingsley finally look away from his screen to face her.
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"Huh?"

"He's been pretty low and grumpy since Monday. I don't think he's doing too well," Nina shrugged. "He even left for home early yesterday which he has done... never."

"It *is* flu season," Kingsley muttered before facing his laptop once again.

When the dreadful hour of the team meeting arrived, Kingsley had half a mind to skip it. But at the same time, he hadn't seen Lorenzo since Sunday, and a part of him was dying to see the other man. Especially after Nina told him that it seemed like Lorenzo wasn't doing so great either.

Kingsley felt both good and bad about that. Bad because he obviously wanted Lorenzo to be well and happy. But also good since it was only fair that he was suffering without Kingsley the way Kingsley was suffering without Lorenzo. Kingsley knew he was being selfish, but at the end of the day, he was only human. And he was far from perfect, or even good.

Kingsley begrudgingly walked inside the conference room, consciously making an effort to not look at Lorenzo. He took the seat farthest away from his boss, and immediately opened his laptop, hiding his face behind the screen. He could only hide for so long, though. Once Lorenzo started the meeting, he had to look up at him.

As soon as Kingsley raised his head, his eyes met Lorenzo's, who was looking directly at him in a room full of people. After a moment of their intense eye contact, Lorenzo cleared his throat and turned around to face the projector and start his PowerPoint presentation.

Kingsley zoned out barely a minute into the presentation. All he could do was stare blankly at his boss. It was the same thing he used to do back when that's all Lorenzo was to him— his boss. But then Kingsley would be staring at him to admire his physique or to daydream about him in bed. Now, however, Kingsley couldn't look away for reasons very different.

"—I'll be handing over your assignments for the next week. I'll be back in the office on Monday so I'll require all the reports to be emailed to me by

then," Lorenzo finished.

After a chorus of agreements throughout the room, Lorenzo passed a file to everyone. He didn't even look at Kingsley as he slid his file across the table. Kingsley picked up the file, flicking it open to see the first page.

The anger that had earlier cooled down rose once again. Lorenzo had handed Kingsley the most mind-numbingly boring work possible. And something that would be near impossible to finish by Monday. Kingsley was not the type of man to take any bullshit, even from his boss. And the idea that Lorenzo was punishing him through work was more than enough to enrage him.

As everyone left the conference room one by one, Kingsley remained seated. Lorenzo glanced at him once as he collected his things, but waited to speak up until they were the only two left in the room.

"Can I help you, Reece?" Lorenzo asked.

"You can start by telling me what the fuck this is," Kingsley said as he slammed the file on the table. "This is way below my pay grade."

"It's work," Lorenzo replied.

"Oh *wow* , thanks for the insight," Kingsley retorted sarcastically. "You did this deliberately, didn't you? What, are you trying to punish me or something?"

"I'm a professional when it comes to work, Mr. Kingsley. Not a middle schooler who'd go around punishing others for something so juvenile."

"Professional? Says the guy who was sleeping with his employee," Kingsley said. Lorenzo flinched as his jaw tightened, he gripped the edge of the chair he was standing next to as he finally looked at Kingsley.

"You're really going to use that against me?"

"You're really going to call what happened between us juvenile?"

"Look," Lorenzo sighed. "You either do the work assigned to you or—"

"No need to finish your sentence," Kingsley had made up his mind. He could no longer work under the same roof as Lorenzo, especially if the other man was going to act this cold towards him. "You'll have my resignation by the end of the day."

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chapter 43, the last chapter of king's guard is up on patreon! the epilogue will be up soon too. if you want to finish the book this month, then the link is in my bio!

Chapter Thirty Five

"Reece, come on, let's not be rash here," Lorenzo sighed. "You don't have to quit."

"I'm sorry but if things between us stay this *tense* then..." Kingsley paused. "I don't think this will be a healthy working environment for me."

"I apologize," Lorenzo said. "I will... make sure I treat you the same way I treat all my other employees."

"That's what you don't get, Lorenzo," Kingsley let out a dry chuckle. "I'm not like all your other employees. It's not about how you treat me, or what work you assign me, it's... it's just too damn hard to be around you right now, okay? I can't simply sit at my desk and pretend that you're just my boss."

"We can work this out, it'll be hard for some time but—"

"Can you seriously look at me right now and tell me that you don't want me? That it's easy for you to be in the same room as me? Can you really ignore it all?" Kingsley asked. Lorenzo stared at Kingsley, his face devoid of any emotion as the two stayed silent. Lorenzo pressed his lips in a thin line, before finally looking away.

"I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry too," Kingsley replied. "But I've made up my mind."

"And there's nothing I can do to change it?" Lorenzo asked one last time, as he glanced at the other man again.

Kingsley bit the inside of his cheek as their eyes stayed focused on one another. Kingsley couldn't even believe how fast things went south between the two. Just a few days ago, things with them were so different. So good.

So much so that Kingsley had almost stopped being in denial of his feelings for his boss.

But now... everything had changed.

A part of Kingsley couldn't not think of the possibility that if he was no longer working for Lorenzo, then maybe, just maybe they could be together again. Do things the right way this time. But he was still angry at him. And his pride simply wouldn't allow him to go running and pleading back to Lorenzo. He had made up his mind about more things than one.

Kingsley shook his head. There was nothing that Lorenzo could do to stop him from resigning.

Kingsley didn't wait for Lorenzo to speak up again, any words that either of them had to say had already been said. Kingsley picked up his laptop, leaving the file behind on the table and went back to his cubicle. Instead of finishing the work he had, he started typing up his resignation.

Once Kingsley was done, all he could do was stare at the screen. He felt numb as his eyes skimmed through the words over and over again. He couldn't even imagine quitting his job a week ago, he truly did love working at Salazar Tech. He had always felt aimless in life, but ever since he started working there he felt like he was finally good for something. That he wasn't just a waste of oxygen and space.

What Kingsley believed in got reinforced once again, that all good things come to an end.

Kingsley waited for the clock to hit five, and then with shaky hands, he finally clicked 'send'. Within a couple of seconds, the email was sent, and Kingsley's resignation was final. Kingsley took a deep breath as he closed his eyes and rested his head on his desk, almost knocking over his coffee mug.

"You okay?" Miles asked as he packed up his things, looking over at Kingsley with concern on his face.

"Huh?" Kingsley rose his head. "Uh, yeah. Just a headache."

"Need an aspirin. I have—"

"I'm good, really," Kingsley reassured. Miles frowned, but nodded nonetheless.

"Is Roan picking you up or should I drop you at your place? Or the subway?" Miles questioned.

"I drove today," Kingsley answered as he finally got up to gather his things as well.

"I didn't even know you had a car," Miles muttered.

"I don't like driving in the city much. Traffic is a pain," Kingsley replied.

"It is, dude, this morning I was stuck—"

Miles and Kingsley kept talking as they exited the office, Nina walking right behind with Anwar by her side. Kingsley didn't mention anything about his resignation, he didn't know how to. Moreover, he hadn't processed it himself either, so the last thing he wanted to do was announce it. He wasn't in the mood for all the questions and comments, he knew how his friends would not let him go without trying to get to the bottom of his sudden decision.

All of them went to the basement parking together. Everyone was a mix of confused, surprised, and in awe when they saw Kingsley unlock his Rolls Royce. He didn't wait for any of them to say anything, and simply got in and started the car.

As soon as Kingsley exited the building, he called Roan through the Bluetooth. The man picked up just after a few rings.

" *Hello?* "

"Meet me at that bar near my place?" Kingsley asked.

" *I thought you weren't drinking ever again after this weekend?* " Roan questioned back.

"I'm not... I'll just get a soda or something," Kingsley muttered.

" *I'll see you at the coffee shop in front of Kai's school in fifteen, yeah? He's still at work grading papers too,* " Roan replied.

"Fine," Kingsley grunted before hanging up.

It took Kingsley twenty minutes to get there, and Roan was already waiting with coffees for both of them. Kingsley kept his bag on the table and got inside the booth as he sighed in exhaustion. Roan didn't say anything, just watched the other man as he gently blew on his coffee before drinking it calmly.

Kingsley looked around the café, and then outside the glass wall at the people walking by. He was looking everywhere except for his friend, a sign that he wanted to talk about something but didn't know how to. Roan sighed, raising a brow as he spoke up.

"Talk before your coffee gets cold," Roan said.

"I quit my job," Kingsley replied.

"For Lorenzo?" Roan asked.

"Not *for* him. Because of him," Kingsley answered.

"What do you mean?"

"It was too hard," Kingsley muttered. "I can't work with him anymore."

"Right," Roan nodded. "How long is your notice period?"

"Two weeks, but I'll figure a way around that. Maybe work remotely or buy out or something," Kingsley said.

"Right. How are you?"

"Fine."

"Right."

"Stop saying that," Kingsley said, irritation in his voice.

"What does it mean for you and Lorenzo if you're not working together anymore?" Roan questioned.

"Nothing? We just go back to how our lives were before we met," Kingsley shrugged.

" *Right...* " Roan said, making Kingsley finally look at him with narrowed eyes. "Can you, though? Go back to how things were before?"

"Sure. My life was easy," Kingsley answered.

"But you were unhappy," Roan retorted.

"Eh," Kingsley paused. "I need to look for jobs."

"It'll be hard to find openings now, with the economy and everything," Roan pointed out.

"I'll figure something out," Kingsley muttered. The two stayed silent until Kingsley sighed deeply and spoke up again. "What was I even thinking? Sleeping with my boss?"

"You clearly *weren't* thinking," Roan muttered, raising his hands in defense when Kingsley threw him a dirty look. "I'm kidding, I'm kidding. But seriously, you had to know that the chances of it turning out well were... close to none."

"I just never thought I'd end up with... feelings," Kingsley almost gagged as he said the last word.

"Ah, so you accept you have feelings for Lorenzo?" Roan rose a brow.

"It's too late for denial now," Kingsley said. "If I didn't then all this would've been easy. But it's not. It's all so... God, I don't think it was this bad even when Cole broke up with me."

"That serious?" The concern on Roan's face grew. Kingsley simply shrugged in response. "Okay, but like, you resigned. So, you both can talk things out and resolve whatever problems you have. Be together this time without any worry."

"It's not that simple," Kingsley groaned. "We both... said things. And it's just way too, I don't know, *tense* between us. I don't want to run back to him. Begging someone to be with me just isn't my thing."

"What are you scared of?" Roan asked, shocking Kingsley with the blunt question.

"What?"

"Sure, you guys fought. But so do all couples. You can sort this out. So, why don't you want to? What are you so scared of?" Roan elaborated.

"I...I..." Kingsley was speechless. He took a moment to think about what Roan had said, pondering on his question. "What if... what if I go to him and he says no? Rejects me? I don't think I can handle that."

"Reece..." Roan frowned, this was probably the first time in years that he had said Kingsley's name out loud. "On the contrary, what if he doesn't? I saw the way he was around you that night. That man has feelings for you too, it was crystal clear. And okay, let's imagine he rejects you. Would you rather live with that or with the regret that you never even tried to get back with him? That you possibly missed out on something great? Tell me, which is worse?"

"I just... I just can't, Roan. I can't do this," the pain could very clearly be heard in Kingsley's voice. "It's easier this way. I can still find a way to get over him. But if... if he says no or if we do get back and something else happens in the future then I... I can't fall for him. I can't let him break my heart."

Kingsley had never been this raw, and Roan couldn't help but feel terrible for his best friend. He hated to see him like that, to see his downcast eyes and the frown that hadn't left his face in days. Ever since his confrontation with Lorenzo.

But at the end of the day, it was Kingsley's decision. If he wanted to run away from love, then Roan couldn't do anything. Nobody could.

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double update because it's diwali (happy diwali all my desi readers) and I'm down with viral so I want to read your comments!

in other news, King's Guard is now complete on Patreon with the epilogue as well as two bonus chapters (first is from the time Kingsley dated Roan, and the other is Kingsley's job interview with Lorenzo) and I'll try to write at least one more bonus chapter this week before I remove all the pre-existing content from Patreon.

updates on here will continue to be weekly, so the book will probably finish by December-ish, if you wanna read it now, then this is the last week you can subscribe to my Patreon to do so.

after this, I'll be updating the book 'My Girlfriend's Other Boyfriend' exclusively on Patreon.

as for Wattpad, I'll have a new book, probably my enemies to lovers, and will start it most likely in Jan 2023 once I'm done publishing King's Guard!

if you have any ideas for bonus chapters or any questions, then please go ahead and let me know!

Chapter Thirty Six

Kingsley sighed as he looked at the clock, it was already quarter to nine, and he was running late.

After quitting his job at Salazar Tech, Kingsley spent the two weeks of his notice period working from home. It didn't come with complications, H.R. was hesitant, but Lorenzo signed off on it. Kingsley was glad that even though Lorenzo didn't want him to resign, he was still respecting his decision.

This was around a month ago. Kingsley wasn't in the mood to start looking for a job once again, but when he went to grab dinner with his father and updated him about his work life— Gianni suggested Kingsley work at the subsidiary that he had started for Kingsley.

He was unsure at first, the last thing he wanted was to work for his father. But Gianni reassured that he wouldn't be interrupting or stepping into Kingsley's work at all. That it was different from what he did, and Kingsley would definitely not be working *for* anyone. He left the choice to Kingsley, who took a couple of days to make up his mind before officially joining the company.

The father and son had a long discussion about what it would mean for them and their public image, especially if Gianni was to introduce him as the C.E.O. In the end, they figured it was probably best if Gianni himself called a press conference and announced that Kingsley was his son, and would now be a part of the family business. Instead of the news eventually coming out from an outside source, which would lead to a greater scandal. At least this way they could control the narrative.

This, of course, came with its fair share of trouble. Kingsley was constantly hounded by the media, something he expected. But after a couple of weeks, the hype finally died down. Now he only had a few reporters occasionally

coming up to him and asking for exclusive interviews and what not. Kingsley denied them all.

He deactivated all of his social media too when the articles started to dig into finding out who his mother was. Kingsley was disgusted that his personal life was being used as spice and gossip, but a part of him also felt... accepted.

That his father had finally owned up to having a son. That he wasn't a secret anymore and no longer had to hide.

Once Kingsley started working as the boss, he finally realised why Lorenzo spent most nights in the office. There was always too much to do, and too little time. He was wishing for the day to have extra hours just so he could be done with his work before the deadlines. He hadn't even been there a month, but he was already drowning in work.

Kingsley's old colleagues obviously had a lot of questions. He quit without telling them, and the next thing they knew, he was the boss of his own company and the son of a billionaire. Kingsley did care about them and considered them friends, which was why he was supposed to meet them at a bar tonight. That is, of course, if work would let him.

"You should head home now, you stayed until midnight yesterday too," said Zeke, Kingsley's new personal assistant.

"I still need to go over—"

"The Peterson data? I'll give it a look and email you my notes. You can finish it tomorrow, then," Zeke said.

"Are you sure?" Kingsley frowned. "You've been working overtime a lot too."

"It's fine," Zeke waved his hand dismissively. "I really don't mind."

"Thank you," Kingsley said. "You're a lifesaver."

"Just doing what I get paid for, boss," Zeke flashed his signature cheeky grin.

"I told you not to call me that," Kingsley sighed as he got up from his chair. "I'll see you on Monday, Zeke."

"Have a good night."

"You too."

Kingsley put on a tech podcast as he started driving. He didn't even realise when he turned from a top 100 rock songs to a podcast sort of guy. But he had to keep up with all the latest news in the industry. Despite his reservations in the beginning, especially with taking on such a massive responsibility— he was really enjoying his work. And he wanted to do well too. Sure, he got the job through nepotism, but he wasn't going to half-ass it. He felt he had more to prove. To show that he was deserving of his title.

"—next we have Lorenzo Salazar with us for an exclusive interview about the latest developments in the—"

Kingsley turned down the volume to zero as soon as he heard Lorenzo's name. No matter where he went, it was as if Lorenzo was haunting him. It didn't help that they worked in the same industry, and since he had invested in Salazar Tech, he had to stay up to date with his former employer.

He knew that his friends would end up mentioning Lorenzo one way or the other. Which was why he was avoiding meeting them until he absolutely had to for the sake of their friendship. In addition to that, he still hadn't decided what to tell them when they ask him why he quit. He didn't want to lie anymore, but he also couldn't tell them the truth because that would only hurt Lorenzo. Something he just couldn't do.

Even though they weren't together anymore, that didn't mean Kingsley had stopped caring about him.

Kingsley walked inside the bar which was packed with the Friday night rush. He looked around to find his friends, and did when he saw Anwar

enthusiastically waving at him. Kingsley walked over to them with a smile on his face, he had worked with them for well over a year and a half, and he kinda missed them. All of them made office even more fun.

It was different now, with all of his employees calling him sir and walking on eggshells around him, no matter how much he tried to act casual in order to make them more comfortable. So far, Zeke was the only one that wasn't uneasy or timid around Kingsley, and actually treated him like a normal human. Not someone to be afraid of.

"Finally!" Anwar exclaimed. "I thought you were gonna cancel again like last week."

"Sorry about that," Kingsley said apologetically. "Some urgent work came up and I couldn't—"

"It's fine," Nina interrupted. "It must be tough at the new place. All the responsibilities..."

"It's alright, I like it," Kingsley shrugged. "What are we drinking?"

"Just beer until now. We were waiting for you before getting started on the hard liquor," Nina said.

"Awesome," Kingsley grinned. "Drinks on me tonight."

"I suppose congratulations are in order, huh?" Anwar said as he patted Kingsley's shoulder with a grin on his face.

They all sat at the table, catching up for the next hour. Nobody had mentioned anything about Kingsley quitting or the sudden revelation about his family background, much to Kingsley's surprise. He had already mentally prepared himself to be bombarded with questions, but it seemed like everyone was choosing to ignore the elephant in the room.

Once enough alcohol was consumed, Anwar pulled Miles with him to the dance floor. Neither of them were good dancers, which made watching them all the more fun. Kingsley munched on fries as he laughed at his

friends making a fool out of themselves. Nina, too, was enjoying the show that involved her boyfriend.

"I'm so glad they don't throw out people for being bad dancers," Nina muttered.

"I think everyone's too drunk to care anyway," Kingsley replied.

"You don't seem drunk," Nina pointed out. Kingsley was only on his third drink, he was taking it slow.

"I have a lot of work to finish this weekend," Kingsley sighed. "Can't afford a hangover."

"How is it going? Working at the new place and everything," Nina finally asked.

"Hectic. There's so much to do and I haven't even gotten the time to get to know everyone at the office that well yet. Half the time I don't even know what I'm doing," Kingsley answered truthfully.

"You'll get the hang of it," Nina said. "It's not easy being the boss."

"Right," Kingsley said. "I'm surprised none of you brought it up."

"We already asked you before and you changed the topic," Nina shrugged. "We figured it was a sensitive topic or else you would've told us yourself. It's not like you're dumb and would quit your job without there being a solid reason so... we decided not to bother you with questions until you yourself feel like you can tell us."

"Oh," Kingsley blinked. He was surprised at the reasoning behind them avoiding the topic. But also grateful that they were being so considerate. "I don't know what to say. That's so... nice of you?"

"Bare minimum, really," Nina tried to be dismissive. "Friends don't pressure friends."

"Tell that to Anwar trying to get Miles to slowdance with him," Kingsley retorted, making Nina chuckle.

"Yeah, I better go save my boyfriend now." Nina was about to get up, when Kingsley stopped her.

"Hey," Kingsley called out, making Nina glance at him. "I was serious. Thank you, really. It's not like I don't trust you guys or anything, it's just... things are very complicated, and I can't—"

"Kingsley, it's okay," Nina interrupted him, her voice sincere. "You don't owe us any answers. Especially not when you're not comfortable talking about them. But if you do ever want to... then I'm here for you. All of us are."

"Thank you," Kingsley repeated, his voice soft. Nina just gave him a small smile and a nod, before getting up and walking towards the two men that were still dancing with their two left feet.

Kingsley couldn't help but smile at the sight in front of him too. Even though his life had turned upside down in the last few weeks, there were still a few things which were the same, and for that he was more thankful than he could express.

Anwar glanced at Kinsgley, before motioning at him to come to them as well. Kingsley chuckled, even though he wasn't one to dance, his feet had a mind of their own as he joined them, finally feeling some semblance of happiness after a long time.

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reminder that it's the last 3 days to finish King's Guard on Patreon as well as all the bonus chapters before I take them down from there! chapter two of my new Patreon exclusive book, My Girlfriend's Other Boyfriend is also up! link in bio.

Chapter Thirty Seven

"—I really think their new project has the potential to be the next big thing. I know we're not sure of their credibility yet but I really believe they're worth the risk," Zeke finished, making Kingsley hum as he nodded while overlooking the files.

"Just a few weeks in and you're already trying to convince me take risks," Kingsley said. "That's rather bold."

"Just go through their proposal again. We can call them for a pitch if you're interested and then you can make up your mind," Zeke replied. "But I just have a really strong gut feeling about them and what they do."

"I trust your judgement," Kingsley paused. "Schedule a meeting with them and ask them to prepare a presentation."

"You got it, boss," Zeke smiled.

Kingsley was growing more and more comfortable in his position as the days passed. He and Zeke had gotten closer, after working together for very long hours five days a week, and sometimes during the weekends too. Kingsley would even go as far as calling him a friend now.

Apart from Zeke, the other employees were also slowly warming up to him, which Kingsley was grateful for. Kingsley had even hosted a dinner party at his place as a way to lighten up the situation and build a bond, which had seemed to work to some extent. Instead of blank faces, he was now being greeted by small smiles and cheerful *good mornings* .

Kingsley and Zeke were once again working overtime, and at this point Kingsley didn't even care anymore. At least when he was working then he didn't have the time to think about Lorenzo. He was spending every bit of his energy in burying Lorenzo deep in his mind as to avoid consciously sulking about what happened.

No matter how much he tried, he couldn't seem to completely push him away. Especially at nights when he was alone in his bed, remembering how it felt to be laying down next to the other man. How his arms would feel around Kingsley, how his breath would tickle his neck and how incredible it was to wake up to his soft kisses.

Just a week ago Kingsley saw the cologne that Lorenzo used in a store, and bought it during a moment of weakness. It still wasn't the same though. And Kingsley hated himself for missing something as stupid as the man's scent. That wasn't the only thing that kept reminding him of Lorenzo, though. Even small things like pancakes, the restaurant they first ate out together at or the song that was playing when he first got in Lorenzo's car... everything kept bringing back memories.

Kingsley closed his eyes before lightly shaking his head, as if trying to push Lorenzo out from his mind once again. Just when he was about to get back to work, his phone rang. Kingsley grabbed his phone from the table, his eyes widening slightly in shock as he stared at the name on the screen.

It had been seven weeks since the last time he spoke to Lorenzo. And now he was calling him?

Kingsley kept watching the phone ring, frozen. Zeke turned to face Kingsley, furrowing his brows with a confused look on his face.

"You going to pick that up?"

Zeke's question finally broke Kingsley out of his trance, as he decided to pick up the call. He was in half a mind not to, but he thought if Lorenzo was calling him after so long then it must've been important. His heartbeat quickened as he grew worried, hoping that Lorenzo was okay and not hurt or in any sort of trouble.

Kingsley didn't say anything as he pressed the phone to his ear. After a moment of silence, Lorenzo finally spoke up from the other end.

"Reece?"

Kingsley's breath hitched at hearing his name from the other man's lips. Until that moment, he hadn't even noticed how much he missed his voice. Kingsley was definitely fucked as he realized, once again, that it wasn't just Lorenzo's touch that he missed. But every single thing about him.

"Yeah?" Was all Kingsley could say, his voice barely above a whisper.

" *Hi* ."

"Hi?"

"Listen... I... I'm sorry for calling you like this but I... Jesus Christ Reece, you have no idea—" Lorenzo went silent as Kingsley heard some shuffling in the other end. He could hear another voice in the background, it was low but Kingsley could make out what the person said. *"Renzo, you coming back inside?"*

When Lorenzo didn't say anything, Kingsley frowned before speaking up.

"Lorenzo?"

" *Yeah, yeah I'm here* ," Lorenzo paused, sighing. " *I shouldn't have called you. I'm sorry. I have to go* ."

Kingsley's frown grew deeper as Lorenzo hung up the call, not even giving Kingsley the chance to protest, which he was almost about to do. Kingsley's heart still felt like it would beat right out of his chest, as he gripped his phone in his hands.

He didn't know how to feel. He felt relieved, satisfied that maybe, just maybe Lorenzo was thinking about him too the way that Kingsley was. But also angry, because he had been trying so hard to forget about the other man, just for him to call Kingsley and bring back all those feelings once again. It was as if every bit of his effort to move on had gone down the drain in an instant. And all it took was a thirty second phone call.

"Everything okay?" Zeke asked, seeming concerned. Kingsley turned to face him, looking at the blond with a blank expression before nodding.

"Yeah," Kingsley cleared his throat. "Can you forward me the report Drea was working on?"

"Sure."

Kingsley got home at midnight, the drive was silent as the only thing on his mind was that one man. Kingsley stared at his black phone screen as he sat on his couch, wondering whether to call Lorenzo back again or not. He was disturbed before he could say what he wanted to, and Kingsley wondered whether Lorenzo was drunk. He couldn't tell from his voice, but he had barely said anything before hanging up, so it was possible.

Drunk or sober, the only thing that mattered was that Lorenzo had called him. That he reached out. And now all Kingsley wanted to do was run back in his arms, but he had control himself.

Kingsley muttered a *'fuck it'* , and clicked on Lorenzo's contact. He closed his eyes shut as he pressed the phone against the side of his face, hearing it ring.

But that's all Kingsley heard. The ring. And eventually the call went into voicemail.

Kingsley didn't know whether to laugh or cry about the fact that Lorenzo didn't pick up his call. Maybe he was busy. Maybe he just didn't want to talk to Kingsley. Whatever the reason, Kingsley could feel his heart breaking all over again.

Kingsley's grip on his phone tightened, and he raised his arm to throw it on the ground. Desperately wanting to break something. To let out some frustration. But he stopped himself right when he was about to do that. He couldn't let anger control him. He was *not* that person. He couldn't become that person.

So, Kingsley did what any heartbroken person would do. Poured himself a drink, put on a Disney movie, and eventually fell asleep on the couch.

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A week had passed since Lorenzo's call, and the man never called back, or even left a message. So, Kingsley once again tried to forget that anything happened, and drowned himself in work.

As Kingsley took over the company, there were a lot of his business partners that he was yet to meet. Which was why he was sitting on the top floor of a skyscraper with Zeke, having coffee with two middle-aged women as they discussed work. The meeting went well, and after a shake of hands and a promise to grab dinner soon, the women left the room, leaving the two young businessmen to pack up their things.

As Zeke was keeping his laptop in his bag, he accidently knocked over Kingsley's half full coffee mug, making it drip all over his thigh.

"Fuck," Kingsley cursed as he stood up, trying to pat his thigh to get some relief from the moderately hot coffee.

"Shit, I'm so sorry boss," Zeke immediately panicked.

"It's fine," Kingsley shook his head as he rushed out to look for the restroom, with Zeke closely following behind him, a worried look still on his face.

As soon as the two entered the washroom, Zeke grabbed a few paper towels and got down to his knees in front of Kingsley, trying to help him clean the stain.

"It's fine, I can do it my—" Kingsley didn't even get the chance to finish his sentence as the restroom door opened.

Zeke, in his panicked state, didn't notice and remained where he was, on his knees in front of Kingsley. But Kingsley's eyes widened in shock as he stared at the man he hadn't seen in a long time. A sense of deja vu travelling through his body as he recalled the last time something similar happened.

Lorenzo mirrored Kingsley's surprised expression, looking down at Zeke and then back up again at Kingsley, who was once again frozen in his spot.

After a few seconds of the eye contact, Lorenzo frowned, before raising a questioning eyebrow.

"This is *not* what it looks like."

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an early update to start off a new month! happy late halloween!

question: what's your favourite movie/show?

Chapter Thirty Eight

"Shit, it's still visible," Zeke muttered as he stood up. "I'm sorry, boss, I'll get it dry cleaned and—"

"It's fine, Zeke, really," Kingsley replied, not taking his eyes off of Lorenzo, who was still standing near the door. "Can you bring the car around? I'll meet you outside the building."

"I can drive your car?" Zeke asked, surprised. Kingsley nodded wordlessly as he handed Zeke the keys, not caring about his half a million dollar vehicle in the slightest. "Sure! I'll give you a call."

Zeke turned around, not paying Lorenzo any mind as he walked to the door. He muttered an 'excuse me' since Lorenzo was blocking the way. Lorenzo finally moved to the side, still not breaking the eye contact with his former employee.

After another few moments of silence, Kingsley sighed before turning towards the mirror. He took a few paper towels to try and clean the stain from his pants, not wanting to walk out with it on. He thanked the universe for deciding not to wear his beige pants in the morning, which he was almost about to.

Kingsley didn't look up when he heard footsteps walking towards him, but maintained a stoic face as he kept wiping the cloth. He knew it wouldn't make a difference now, but he needed some distraction from the other man.

"Reece," Lorenzo finally broke the silence, and Kingsley paused his movements for a second, before continuing it again. "Reece, will you please look at me?"

"No," Kingsley grumbled, he knew he sounded like a child, but he didn't care.

"Please?"

"Why?" Kingsley asked, he stopped aggressively wiping his pants, but was still looking at the ground. "Why should I?"

"Because... Reece, please just look at me," Lorenzo repeated, his voice sounding desperate.

Kingsley closed his eyes shut, taking a deep breath in to center himself, before turning around to look at Lorenzo once again. Kingsley's jaw was locked tight, and his gaze was piercing as he stared at the other man. Lorenzo's expression, however, grew softer the moment Kingsley faced him. Kingsley knew that emotion. Relief.

"What do you want, Lorenzo?" Kingsley asked, his voice stern.

"I want to apologize," Lorenzo replied.

"For what?" Kingsley raised a questioning brow. "What was that phone call all about? Were you drunk?"

"Would you believe me if I said I was completely sober?" Lorenzo let out a dry laugh. "Javi and his fiancé are staying over and just watching them together... it reminded me of us and I just had this strong urge to hear your voice. I couldn't control myself. I was in all of my senses yet I couldn't control myself from running back to you."

"You seemed to have controlled yourself just fine by not picking up my call," Kingsley muttered, still salty about the instance.

"I apologize for that. I was too much of a coward to talk to you," Lorenzo admitted.

"Why?"

"Because I was afraid you wouldn't want to talk to me and... and just that thought—" Lorenzo cleared his throat before continuing. "I'm so sorry for how I handled things, Reece. When you told me how close that reporter was to telling the world about us, I... I just panicked. The only solution I saw

was ending things with you, but I know now that I could've been a much better boyfr—"

"We were never... that," Kingsley sharply interrupted Lorenzo. "You did what was right for you. I'm not... I'm not angry at you for ending things. Nothing is worth ruining everything you've spent years building."

"Then tell me why do I feel like I'm going insane every second that I'm not with you?" Lorenzo said, his voice soft now as he walked closer to Kingsley. "Why am I not able to work or sleep, or focus on anything? Why are you the only thing on my mind all the damn time?"

"Lorenzo..."

Lorenzo took a few more steps, until he was right in front of the other man who hadn't moved an inch from where he was standing. Lorenzo lifted his slightly shaky hand, keeping it on Kingsley's cheek, his thumb gently stroking his soft skin as he continued. Kingsley looked away, not wanting to meet Lorenzo's eyes again. He wanted to maintain his resolve, and he knew he couldn't do that with the way Lorenzo was staring right into his soul.

"I can't even begin to apologize for insinuating that you're not a hard worker or that you're spoilt. It was just my anger and anxiety speaking, which is no excuse and I... I'm so goddamn sorry for my words, Reece," Lorenzo whispered. "When I saw you for the first time, I instantly wanted you. But I never acted on it. Do you know why?"

"Why?" Kingsley's voice matched Lorenzo's. Low and shaky.

"Because physical attraction... that's something I can ignore. But when we started working together, when I saw how bold and passionate you are... how stubborn and caring and how... just how fucking amazing you are..." Lorenzo paused. "I had to give in. I couldn't stay away from you any longer. I *can't* stay away from you any longer."

"What... what are you saying?" Kingsley's breath hitched as Lorenzo's thumb grazed his lower lip.

"I want a chance to make things right. To treat you the way you should be treated. I don't want to hide you or us anymore. I want to hold your hand and kiss you in public, without fear," Lorenzo answered. "I know we weren't boyfriends but... but that's what I want to be now. If you'll have me."

Kingsley's eyes widened in surprise as he turned his head to look at Lorenzo. He was searching for any hint of uncertainty or insincerity on his face, but he found none. Lorenzo looked sure about what he wanted, and what he wanted was Kingsley.

"I... I can't..." Kingsley was dumbstruck.

"I know it's too much to ask of you. And after the way I reacted, I know I don't deserve a second chance. But I'm begging you for it, Reece," Lorenzo said. "I was in love once. And I fucked it up by ignoring the problems we had. By giving up. But I'm not going to make the same mistake with you. I want to fix it. Fix us. Please just give me the chance to."

No matter how much Kingsley had convinced himself that he wouldn't get back together with Lorenzo, his heart was on a different tangent all together. He was scared. Terrified, even. But Lorenzo's words gave him hope. Hope that if the man in front of him was trying to fight for him, then maybe, just maybe, they could tackle any problems they have in the future.

That maybe they could make it work.

Kingsley thought about all the times he woke up next to Lorenzo. Lorenzo was usually awake before him, but he'd stay in bed for as long as he could. With his arms wrapped around Kingsley, his lips pressing gentle kisses on his neck. He thought about the lingering stares whenever they were at work, the subtle touches, the soft whispers that made Kingsley curl his toes in anticipation.

Kingsley couldn't tell how much time had passed. His thoughts were racing a million miles an hour in his head as he tried to make sense of everything. He wished he was better at handling his fears and his emotions, but the truth

was that he spent years with his guards up, and now allowing someone to tear through them scared him to the core.

But at the end of the day, the sparks and happiness that he felt with Lorenzo was worth any potential heartbreak in the future. If he could go back in time, he would not step away from Lorenzo. The pain that he felt when Lorenzo ended things surely hurt, but he wouldn't change what he had with him for the world. He would do it all over again, and that's the only thing that mattered.

Lorenzo was worth it.

Before Kingsley could say anything, his phone rang. Lorenzo sighed as he removed his hand from Kingsley's cheek, before taking a step back. The hopeful look on his face had turned into a frown. Kingsley took his phone out of his pocket, answering the call without seeing who it was as he pressed the phone against his ear.

"Hi, I'm waiting outside the building," Zeke informed.

"I'll be right there," Kingsley muttered.

Lorenzo took that as his hint and turned around and started walking towards the door. But before he could leave, Kingsley grabbed his elbow, making him turn around. Lorenzo didn't have the chance to process what had happened as Kingsley kept his hand at the back of Lorenzo's neck, pulling him in to connect their lips.

It took Lorenzo barely a second to get over the surprise, as he kept his hands on Kingsley's lower back, pulling him in closer, leaving no space between their bodies. Kingsley's hand made its way to Lorenzo's hair, his fingers entangling and pulling at the strands as he kissed the man with desperation. He had missed those lips so goddamn much.

There was nothing sweet or gentle about the kiss. It was rough, but it was so because of the vulnerability that the two men were feeling at that moment. Both of them knew that their lives were now entertwined in a way that they couldn't disconnect. It was a promise.

Kingsley didn't know whether he was the one to pull away or Lorenzo, but both of them were panting for oxygen once they did. His forehead was resting against Lorenzo's, their eyes still closed as they tried to catch their breath. A kiss had never taken so much out of him, but this was just the effect Lorenzo had on him. And from the way Lorenzo's chest was rapidly rising and falling, Kingsley could tell that the other man felt the same way.

"I hope that answered your question," Kingsley whispered.

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Chapter Thirty Nine

"—I don't know, we've been trying to plan something since that day but either I'm busy with work or he is. We haven't been able to find time where both of us are free. It's so frustrating but not like we can do much about it. We both have businesses that are depending on us."

" *Damn* ," Roan said once Kingsley was done with his rant. " *What about the weekend?"*

"I have a photoshoot and an interview with a magazine on Saturday. And Lorenzo said something about showing his brother and his fiancè around the city," Kingsley sighed as he fixed his tie in front of the mirror. His phone was on speaker as he caught Roan and Kai up with his life.

" *I'm just glad you both talked things out and are back together* ," Kai said. " *And that you don't have to hide it or worry about losing your jobs now."*

"Yeah," Kingsley paused. "Not gonna lie, the whole sneaking around thing was fun at first but in the long run... I should've known it would only lead to trouble. But then again I wasn't really thinking about us in the long run."

" *All's well that ends well, my friend* ," Roan pitched in.

"We're still going to keep it on the down-low, though," Kingsley said as he looked at the box with all of his cufflinks, deciding which one to wear for the event. "It'll be for the best if there's a few months gap between me leaving my old job and us dating in public. Leaves no room for any scandal."

" *That's smart* ," Roan replied, and Kingsley could imagine the blond nodding his head with a thoughtful look at the other end of the call.

"Yeah well, we need to even go out in public together for there to be a scandal in the first place. But neither of us has the time," Kingsley frowned,

patting his pockets to make sure he had his wallet and keys. "At least when we were working together we got to spend time around one another."

" *You'll figure it out,"* Kai added. " *It'll take some time for both of you to find the rhythm but you will."*

"Let's hope so," Kingsley muttered. "Alright, I'm ready and good to go. I'll see you guys, uh, I'll see you guys whenever I see you guys. Bye."

" *Bye!"* Both Roan and Kai said, before hanging up the call.

Kingsley was heading to the annual party of one of his business partners. He had absolutely no interest in going, but as the boss, he now had to maintain good relations and show his face wherever and whenever needed.

He was taking Zeke as his plus one, mainly because the twenty-six year old had been at the company much longer than Kingsley, and was very good with people. Kingsley needed Zeke beside him to keep telling him who was who and what to say or what not to say. Zeke had truly been a lifesaver since the day Kingsley started working at the new job.

After handing his car keys to the valet, Kingsley walked over to Zeke who was already waiting for him near the entry. Kingsley nodded at him wordlessly, as both the men went inside the massive hall. The place was no less than a mansion, it would've cost a fortune to plan this event and Kingsley wanted to take full advantage of the open bar. Within professional limits, of course.

Before Kingsley could get a single drink, his hand was being shaken and small talk was being made. Kingsley didn't even know half the people he spoke to that already knew who Kingsley was. So, the man just nodded politely and looked at Zeke for help whenever the conversation came to a standstill. He also thanked Zeke for getting him champagne as he exchanged business cards with various start-up founders. Networking was an important part of his job now and he wasn't a big fan of that fact.

Kingsley's social battery was running out faster as the minutes passed, and he finally managed to sneak to the open bar once the speeches began. Zeke

followed behind him, and Kingsley exhaled in relief as soon as he had a glass of scotch in his hand. He gulped it down in a single go, making Zeke chuckle.

"You're really not used to this, are you?" Zeke asked.

"Not at all," Kingsley answered truthfully. "It's kinda ironic 'cause I used to throw parties every other weekend back in school, so I'm used to people around me but these work events are just..."

"Exhausting?" Zeke suggested, making Kingsley nod as he motioned for the bartender to get him a refill.

"Thank you for coming here with me, though. I owe you one," Kingsley said.

"Just doing my job, boss," Zeke grinned. Kingsley gave him a small smile, as he sipped on his drink. Zeke's eyes fell on Kingsley's hair, making him speak up again as he pointed towards his head. "You have something over there."

"Huh? Where?" Kingsley asked as he ran a hand through his hair.

"There," Zeke said, shaking his head when Kingsley missed it. "No, no."

Zeke stepped closer as he reached forward to remove the singular cloth thread from Kingsley's hair. Just as he was doing so, Kingsley's eyes fell to the side and he noticed Lorenzo walking towards him.

For a second, Kingsley was surprised, but that soon changed to happiness as he smiled widely at the man. Zeke turned around to see who Kingsley was grinning at, before moving aside.

"Reece," Lorenzo greeted, his voice professional as well.

"Lorenzo," Kingsley replied with a nod, trying to look serious but he couldn't get rid of the smile on his face. He wasn't expecting to see Lorenzo again this soon, especially at this work event that he was dreading even going to so this was a great surprise.

"Hello," Zeke butted in, raising his hand to shake Lorenzo's, who looked at it quite warily. "Zeke Peterson."

"Lorenzo Salazar."

As soon as Lorenzo said his full name, Zeke's eyes lit up with recognition. Kingsley looked between the two, before speaking up.

"He's my personal assistant," Kingsley explained. "And Zeke, Lorenzo is my—"

"Former employer, CEO and founder of Salazar Tech," Zeke interrupted. "I've heard so much about you, Mr. Salazar, and I'm a huge fan of your work. It's wonderful to finally meet you."

"That's flattering," Lorenzo replied with a polite smile, one Kingsley had seen him use plenty of times with colleagues. He was aware of how fake it was.

Kingsley and Lorenzo looked at each other, no words being spoken, making Zeke look between the two with a slightly puzzled expression. When he noticed the tension, the blond assistant took a step back.

"I think I just saw an old colleague. Is it okay if I go and say hi?" Zeke asked, glancing at Kingsley for permission. The man simply nodded, not removing his eyes from Lorenzo.

Zeke smiled, even though Kingsley wasn't looking at him, before excusing himself and walking away. Lorenzo took a step closer towards Kingsley, signing at the bartender to get him a drink. Kingsley noticed the way Lorenzo's shoulders were *tense* , his body language doing the talking for him.

"Everything okay?"

"First I see that man on his knees in front of you, and then he's fixing your hair," Lorenzo muttered, looking away towards the crowd.

"Are you jealous?" Kingsley questioned with a raised brow. When Lorenzo didn't answer, he smirked. "You *are* jealous."

"Do you blame me?" Lorenzo grumbled, making Kingsley chuckle.

"There was something in my hair, he was helping me out," Kingsley explained. "He's just my P.A., you have nothing to worry about."

"He's young. Easy on the eyes," Lorenzo noted.

"Should *I* be worried now?" Kingsley asked, his tone indicating that he was joking. Lorenzo turned towards him again, giving a look that screamed ' *really?* '.

"I'm sorry," Lorenzo finally said, his body relaxing as he leant at the bar. "I swear I'm not some jealous or possessive prick but... I just haven't seen you in so long and I missed you."

"I've missed you too," Kingsley smiled. "We're seeing each other now."

"And you have no idea how happy it made me when I saw you here," Lorenzo said.

"I do have an idea because I felt the same way," Kingsley replied, and Lorenzo finally cracked a smile.

Both of them stopped speaking once they heard a loud round of applause. They looked towards the stage where the speaker was being honored with some award. Neither of them cared about it, and Lorenzo glanced towards Kingsley once more, this time not removing his eyes from the other man.

Kingsley looked towards him, raising a questioning eyebrow. Lorenzo said nothing as he continued staring at him, his expression heated and Kingsley couldn't help but squirm slightly under his gaze. Lorenzo was the only man that had such an effect on him, and he didn't even need words to make his stomach feel like there were elephants doing summersaults in there.

"Why are you staring at me like that?" Kingsley asked.

"Like what?"

"Like you want to tear off my clothes," Kingsley stated.

"So what if I do?"

"You do?"

"I'd be up for that at any given moment," Lorenzo said.

"Huh," Kingsley hummed as he looked back at Lorenzo, a mischievous grin on his face. "I think I know where the coat room is..."

"Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

"I'll leave first and then you follow me after a couple of minutes?"

"I'll see you there," Lorenzo winked.

***

i have exams in three days, wish me luck ;-;

Chapter Forty

A/N : extra long chapter plus a double update, you're welcome. on that note, go check out my Instagram if you haven't [karaflynnofficial]

****

Kingsley's back hit the wall as he watched Lorenzo walk towards him slowly. With every second that he took, Kingsley's heart beat grew faster. Lorenzo wasn't even touching him yet, just teasing him by the way his eyes were roaming all over his clothed body.

Kingsley's breath hitched as Lorenzo took off his suit jacket, dropping it carelessly on the floor as he loosened his tie. The look on his face was the same as a predator, and for the first time in his life, Kingsley didn't mind being the prey. If anything, it excited him. So much so that the bulge in his pants was already clearly visible.

His eyes fell to Lorenzo's crotch as the other man unbuckled his belt. Kingsley gulped. He hadn't slept with anyone but Lorenzo in a long time, and he didn't want to either. Every time he went out, back when he and Lorenzo weren't together and someone even as much as looked at Kingsley, the man just felt... wrong. As if he belonged with Lorenzo and no one else. Just the thought of anyone else touching him made him feel disgusted.

There was only one man that he wanted, and he was currently torturing him by not fucking him against the wall already.

Lorenzo smirked as he watched Kingsley get all flustered, staring at Lorenzo's still clothed but hard dick in anticipation. Kingsley finally moved his gaze to Lorenzo's face, as he held his jacket to take it off. But Lorenzo stopped him, covering Kingsley's hands with his own.

Kingsley's arms fell to his side as Lorenzo undressed him, never breaking their eye contact for even a moment. Lorenzo slowly unbuttoned Kingsley's shirt, really taking his time with it. As if they weren't hiding out at a party in

a room where there wasn't a lock, and anybody could walk right in and catch them in the act.

Lorenzo removed Kingsley's shirt from his shoulders, before placing a hand on his pecs, moving it down to his abdomen and then back up again. Lorenzo's thumb grazed Kingsley's hard nub, making him inhale sharply.

"You have no idea how much I missed this. Missed touching you," Lorenzo whispered. "The way you move underneath me, hearing my name from your lips, the look on your face when you cum... You're truly a work of art, Reece."

"You're really making me suffer here, Enzo," Kingsley replied, his voice low and needy. "Please do something already."

"What do you want me to do?" Lorenzo asked as he bent down slightly to press his lips against Kingsley's collarbone, making the other man entangle his fingers in Lorenzo's hair. His eyes closed shut now as he focused just on the feeling of having the man of his dreams finally so close to him once again.

"Please..." Kingsley breathed out.

This was uncharacteristic of him. He was never one to beg, always on the other side of that scale. But just like Lorenzo, he too had missed his touch. And he could no longer contain himself. He wanted more, and he wanted it now. He didn't care if he had to beg for it, he'd do anything if that meant Lorenzo would speed up already.

"Please what?" Lorenzo asked, sucking on Kingsley's neck, not caring about the marks it would leave.

Kingsley gripped Lorenzo's hair, pulling his head back slightly so that he could look at his face as he spoke. Lorenzo's eyes were hooded with lust, but Kingsley knew it wasn't just that. He knew there was more.

"I'll beg if that's what you want, but I'm not the one that has something to prove here," Kingsley said, trying to taunt Lorenzo, knowing full well that

it would get a reaction out of him.

"Reece..." Lorenzo said softly, before letting out a chuckle. "Fuck, you haven't changed a bit."

"Did you want me to?"

"Never," Lorenzo replied in a heartbeat, and leaned forward without wasting another second to smash his lips against Kingsley's.

Kingsley's grip tightened as he tugged harder on Lorenzo's hair, meanwhile Lorenzo's hands roamed Kingsley's upper body, wanting to touch every inch of him. He kept a hand at the back of his neck, pulling the other man even closer as he bit Kingsley's lower lip gently, making him moan in the kiss.

Kingsley let go of Lorenzo's hair, gripping the side of his hips to pull him closer, wanting to press both of their hard ons together. Kingsley had never thought he would miss the way Lorenzo's tongue felt against his, which only made him think of the other places Lorenzo could lick him. The thought sent a shiver down his spine, and it wasn't missed by his former boss.

Lorenzo finally started working on unzipping Kingsley's pants, before pulling them down. Kingsley eagerly stepped out of them, kicking them to the side, their lips not separating for even a moment. Lorenzo palmed Kingsley through his tight briefs, and Kingsley wanted nothing but to free his dick from the confines, but he wanted Lorenzo to do it. So, he waited.

Lorenzo's hand trailed back, cupping Kingsley's ass as he kneaded the soft flesh. He slipped one hand inside Kingsley's briefs, running his finger in between Kingsley's cheeks. Kingsley knew Lorenzo was teasing him, and he wasn't ashamed to admit that it was working. He never knew he would be so eager to bottom for a man, but he desperately wanted Lorenzo in him.

Kingsley wanted the feeling of being full, he wanted to feel Lorenzo's hot body pressed against his, he wanted to hear the lewd sounds of their skin slapping against one another's. He wanted it all.

Lorenzo rubbed the tip of his finger around Kingsley's hole, still taunting him. Just when Kingsley was going to pull away and tell Lorenzo to shove something inside him already— Lorenzo beat him to the chase by separating their lips and pressing two fingers inside Kingsley's mouth.

Lorenzo stared at Kingsley with a heated gaze as Kingsley sucked on his fingers, getting them wet. Lorenzo looked up from Kingsley's lips to his eyes, and Kingsley was already looking back at him. Kingsley felt the room get warmer just with the eye contact as he continued licking Lorenzo's fingers.

Lorenzo inhaled deeply, before removing his fingers from Kingsley's mouth. He turned the man around, now Kingsley's abdomen pressed against the wall. Lorenzo kissed Kingsley's shoulders, and Kingsley shivered. The fact that he was almost naked while Lorenzo was still fully clothed somehow made him feel even more dirty.

Lorenzo kissed down Kingsley's spine, licking down when he reached Kingsley's lower back, till he was at his hole. Kingsley kept his hands on the wall, wanting to hold something but there was nothing. Lorenzo finally pulled down Kingsley's briefs, before diving in. The feeling of Lorenzo's hot breath followed by his cool tongue was too much. Too goddamn much, and Kingsley let it be known by the sounds escaping his lips.

Kingsley's breathing became staggered as Lorenzo inserted a finger, alternating between it and his tongue as he prepared Kingsley for what was about to... *cum* .

Kingsley tilted his head to the side, trying to look down at the man whose head was buried in his ass. Kingsley kept a hand on Lorenzo's hair, pushing him in even further. After a few minutes, Lorenzo finally pulled away and stood up, and Kingsley immediately missed his closeness.

He looked back at Lorenzo, his confusion going away when he saw Lorenzo unbutton his shirt, not removing it from his shoulders though. Lorenzo looked around the moderately sized room, full of coats and jackets. His eyes fell on a table, and he motioned his head towards it. Kingsley

immediately knew what he meant, as he walked over to the table and bent down, propping one leg up to give Lorenzo a much better view.

Lorenzo walked behind Kingsley, kneading his ass once again before landing a slap on it, making Kingsley groan out loud. Kingsley gripped the edge of the desk, his eyes closed shut as Lorenzo repeated the action again. And then again. He knew his ass would be red by now, and that only made him harder, if that was even possible.

Lorenzo leaned forward to once again insert his fingers in Kingsley's mouth, and Kingsley obliged by getting them wet one more time. Soon enough he had three fingers thrusting inside him, spreading him open. As soon as Kingsley opened his eyes again, he noticed the mirror in front of them.

His eyes met Lorenzo's through the mirror, who was clearly aware of it already as he smirked at Kingsley's surprised expression. Lorenzo removed his fingers, and Kingsley instantly missed having them inside him. But his anticipation only grew as Lorenzo unzipped his pants, pulling them down along with his briefs till his thigh.

Lorenzo rubbed his dick against Kingsley's ass, all the while staring at him through the mirror. His sly smirk suddenly turned into a frown, as he realized something.

"I don't have a condom," Lorenzo said.

"I don't either," Kingsley replied. He paused, before continuing. "I got tested a week ago."

"A couple of months for me, but I haven't been with anyone but you," Lorenzo stated.

Even though Kingsley had an idea that Lorenzo wasn't the type to sleep around, and even if he did while they were broken up then it wasn't any of his business, but... it still warmed his heart to know that just like him, Lorenzo didn't want anyone else either.

"We're both safe then so..." Kingsley trailed off.

"No lube either," Lorenzo said. "I don't want to hurt you."

Lorenzo pulled up his pants, and Kingsley couldn't help but feel disappointed. A part of him was also touched because he knew just how hard and horny Lorenzo was, but he was willing to not give in. Even if they used spit, Lorenzo was too big and it wouldn't exactly be super pleasurable for Kingsley.

Kingsley got up from the desk, and was about to walk over to where his clothes were dropped when Lorenzo grabbed his hand to stop him.

"Woah, where are you going?" Lorenzo asked.

"To get dressed?" Kingsley rose a brow when Lorenzo smirked.

"Who said you can get dressed?" Lorenzo whispered as he pushed Kingsley back gently, making him sit on the table. Kingsley looked at Lorenzo in confusion, but it finally cleared when Lorenzo got down on his knees.

Kingsley leaned his head back with a loud groan as Lorenzo licked the tip of his cock. He went from the head to the base, before going back up and sucking just the tip. Lorenzo kept kissing and sucking, getting Kingsley's dick wet as his hands gripped the side of his hips tightly.

Kingsley's hands flew to Lorenzo's hair as the man finally took his dick in his mouth. Lorenzo gave the best blowjobs, and Kingsley loved the warmth of his mouth. He could feel his dick hit the back of Lorenzo's throat, the other man's nails digging into his skin.

"Enzo..." Kingsley breathed deeply. Lorenzo looked up, Kingsley's dick still in his mouth as he bobbed his head. "Kiss me. Please."

Lorenzo stood up, his hand replacing his mouth as he started stroking Kingsley. Kingsley unzipped Lorenzo's pants, once again freeing his dick to return the favor as the two kissed. Lorenzo pressed their dicks together, and

Kingsley loved the feeling of Lorenzo's hot cock against his own. Lorenzo jerked them off together as they kissed.

"Please fuck me, please Enzo..." Kingsley said against Lorenzo's lips. "I want to cum with you inside me."

"It's going to hurt," Lorenzo repeated.

"I don't give a damn," Kingsley was stubborn. There was nothing he wanted more in that moment that Lorenzo. "I want your fucking dick inside me."

"Reece..."

"I can take the pain," Kingsley reassured.

"Are you certain?" Lorenzo asked once again.

"Yes."

"Then get on your knees," Lorenzo whispered. "You know what to do."

Kingsley smirked, doing as he was told by getting down and taking Lorenzo in his mouth. Kingsley did his best in licking as much as he could to get his dick as slick as possible. He paused for a second to lick his own fingers, before working on Lorenzo again while simultaneously inserting his fingers in his hole.

The sight of Kingsley sucking Lorenzo's dick while fingering his own hole was the most erotic thing Lorenzo had ever seen, and he was close to blowing his load just at that. But he couldn't, not yet, so he kept his hand on Kingsley's shoulder to get him to stand back up.

Kingsley bent against the desk once again, his eyes on Lorenzo through the mirror as his ex-boss lined up his dick against Kingsley's hole. Kingsley took in a deep breath as he felt Lorenzo press inside, just his head breaching through his tight muscle. Lorenzo soothingly rubbed Kingsley's sides, before bending down to press chaste kisses on his shoulder.

Kingsley hissed as Lorenzo pushed in slowly, and Lorenzo tried to distract the other man by grabbing his dick and stroking it. It seemed to work as Kingsley whispered Lorenzo's name, asking him to keep going.

Once Lorenzo was completely in, he stayed in that position, holding Kinsgley from behind. Kingsley was breathing heavily, and after a few moments, he finally moved his own hips. Lorenzo took that as a sign, and started to slowly thrust in and out.

"Are you okay?" Lorenzo asked, his voice soft and full of concern.

"More than okay," Kingsley answered. "You can... you can move faster. Please..."

Lorenzo removed his dick from Kingsley all of a sudden, but not for long as he flipped Kingsley around, pushing him on top of the table, his legs spread wide and his ass dangling off the edge. Lorenzo stepped in between, reapplying more spit to his dick, before pressing in once again.

Lorenzo started stroking Kingsley's dick as he thrusted in and out, increasing his pace slowly but steadily. He wanted to properly see Kingsley's face as he fucked him raw. Lorenzo was wrong earlier, *this* was the most erotic sight.

Once Kingsley had relaxed, Lorenzo began to go harder. His eyes carefully searched Kingsley's face for any signs of discomfort, but he only saw the familiar look of bliss. Lorenzo jerked off Kingsley even faster, and by the way Kingsley's moans grew louder, he knew the man was close.

Lorenzo went all in, pounding into Kingsley as he played with his dick. Kingsley's eyes closed shut, and Lorenzo knew what that meant. Lorenzo removed his dick from inside Kingsley, quickly replacing it with his fingers as he bent down to take Kingsley in his mouth. Kingsley's hands flew to grip Lorenzo's hair, as he thrusted his hips to fuck the other man's mouth.

With a loud moan, it barely took Kingsley a minute to shoot inside Lorenzo's mouth. Once he was done cumming, Lorenzo went up to kiss

Kingsley, giving him a taste of himself as he started stroking his own cock. As the two men kissed, Lorenzo felt himself getting closer and closer.

Finally, he came all over Kingsley's abdomen and chest. Kingsley had craved the feeling of the hot liquid all over him, and he finally got it. Lorenzo pulled away from the kiss, but rested his forehead against Kingsley's as both of them breathed heavily.

"Want to go back to my place for round two?"

***

who do you think said the last line?

Chapter Forty One

"I always thought it was weird that you never invited me over to your place but I get it now," Lorenzo said with a chuckle as he looked around Kingsley's massive room.

"You never asked to come over either," Kingsley replied as he turned around to face Lorenzo. Both of them were lying naked on his bed, just done with their second round of sex.

"I figured maybe you had roommates or something, and since we were keeping our thing hidden... my house just seemed like the safer option," Lorenzo explained.

"Makes sense," Kingsley hummed.

"I like your apartment," Lorenzo stated.

"I don't," Kingsley said casually. "I like yours more. It's personal and... homely."

"You can put up some pictures on your walls and get some plants, maybe. Spruce up the place a bit," Lorenzo suggested.

He, too, had noticed how empty Kingsley's apartment was despite the state of the art furniture. It almost looked like a demo home, and not like somebody had been living there for years now.

"Maybe," Kingsley muttered. Lorenzo reached forward to play with Kingsley's hair, which had gotten longer since the time he quit his old job. Kingsley's mind was racing a thousand miles per hour once again, and he couldn't help but overthink. "So, are we... are we together now? Like *together* together?"

"You're asking if we're in a relationship?" Lorenzo raised a questioning brow. Kingsley paused for a second, before nodding. "I'd like to believe we

are. And that we're exclusive to each other. Of course, only if you want to be as well. I know I do."

"I do too," Kingsley replied. "I'm tired of running and hiding."

"So am I," Lorenzo said with a soft smile on his face as he twirled Kingsley's hair between his finger. "Boyfriends, huh? Who would've thought?"

"I haven't done this... relationship stuff in a long while. My last one was in high school which is completely different now that we're both busy adults. So I... I'm going to try my best but I know I'll mess up from time to time," Kingsley admitted.

"We're human, we make mistakes. I know sometimes I let my fears overwhelm me and do stupid things, but I promise I'm going to do my hardest to be the best boyfriend possible," Lorenzo said. "I want to make you the happiest man alive."

"Being with you makes me happy."

"You make me happy too," Lorenzo smiled.

"This just got very corny," Kingsley muttered, breaking their eye contact as he awkwardly looked away. He wasn't used to having a heart to heart anymore. Lorenzo chuckled as he kept a hand on Kingsley's cheek, grazing it gently with his thumb.

"See? We're already doing boyfriend stuff," Lorenzo grinned.

"I'm going to bite your hand," Kingsley grumbled, feeling his cheeks get hotter. He wasn't easily flustered, but that's just the effect Lorenzo had on him.

"Kinky," Lorenzo winked, making Kingsley look back at him with a blank expression on his face as he struggled to keep from smiling.

"Sure. If you're into that," Kingsley said.

"Only thing I wanna be into is you," Lorenzo replied as he shifted closer, wrapped his arms around the other man. Lorenzo was big on cuddling, something he had earlier kept at bay. But now he was letting it all out.

"I'm going to bite your shoulder," Kingsley said in a muffled voice.

"If you want to mark me then just say the words, *cariño* . You know I'm all yours now," Lorenzo paused. "I've been all yours for a while."

"How are you so— nevermind," Kingsley sighed.

Kingsley finally gave in as he adjusted himself to get closer to Lorenzo in a more comfortable position, not entirely minding the post-sex cuddling. In fact, he knew it was something he could easily get used to. *Very* easily.

"I want to take you out on a date," Lorenzo said after a brief period of silence. "Pick you up. Get you flowers. Wine and dine you properly. Then drop you back home."

"No fucking me into the night after our date?" Kingsley asked.

"Nope. Maybe just a goodnight kiss," Lorenzo answered.

"Only if you're lucky," Kingsley played along with a soft hum.

"I am lucky because I already have you," Lorenzo said with yet another cheeky smile, making the tip of Kingsley's ears pink as his face heated up again.

"My teeth. Your skin. Remember," Kingsley warned. "We really are going backwards in this relationship, huh? First sex, and then a date."

"Eh, I don't care now that we're together finally," Lorenzo shrugged lightly. "Is it a bad thing a part of me is kinda glad you quit your job? Just because it means we can finally be together."

"So am I. Not happy about the months we spent away from each other but... all's well that ends well," Kingsley recalled Roan's words from earlier.

Kingsley turned around so that Lorenzo was holding him, his back facing the older man's chest as Lorenzo nestled his head in his neck. Kingsley didn't remember the last time he felt this much at peace, just being in Lorenzo's arms had made him forget all about the stress of every day life. He didn't care about all the work that he had pending, or all the meetings he had scheduled for the upcoming week. All he cared about was the warmth he felt both inside and outside when Lorenzo was around.

"I should leave before I fall asleep," Lorenzo said with a yawn.

"You shouldn't drive when you're this sleepy," Kingsley replied. "Stay the night."

"But Javi and—"

"Just drop them a text," Kingsley paused. "Do they... do they know about..."

"I told him, yeah," Lorenzo said. "He spent an hour scolding me for letting you go and not putting up a fight."

"What did you tell him?" Kingsley asked.

"Just how amazing you are. How I really think you're the one and how I lo—" Lorenzo paused, both his and Kingsley's heartbeat shooting up as they realized what Lorenzo was just about to confess.

"Enzo?" Kingsley's voice was soft as he pried off Lorenzo's arms from around his waist, turning back around to look at his face once again.

"Reece, I..." Lorenzo paused, not being sure of how to say what he wanted to say. "It took losing you for me to finally realize just how strongly I feel for you. I wish I had known it sooner, but it is what it is. I love you. I have for a while now."

"Enzo..."

"You don't have to say it back. I really hope to God that you do someday, but it's okay if you can't tonight. I understand that you need time, especially with your commitment issues and— *ow!* "

Lorenzo rubbed his shoulder, that Kingsley had just bitten. Kingsley was staring at him with a frown, not because he was sad, but simply confused. Out of everything, Kingsley was definitely not expecting Lorenzo to express his love for him. That too so directly.

"Why did you bite me?"

"I told you I would."

"But—"

"Just shut up and kiss me."

The two men stayed in each other's arms for the rest of the night, even when they were awake, they didn't talk, and simply relaxed before sleep finally took over them and they passed out.

When Kingsley woke up, Lorenzo was already awake, but still in bed with him. Kingsley groaned, shifting slightly as he cursed himself for not closing the shades properly before falling asleep. He was somewhat of a vampire, and liked his room as dark as possible. Especially in the mornings. The current rays of sunshine peeking through were annoying him, but not for long as Lorenzo started pressing soft kisses on his shoulder blade.

"Good morning, *mi amor,* " whispered Lorenzo.

"Morning," Kingsley grunted.

"I forgot how grumpy you always are after waking up," Lorenzo chuckled.

"I'm not grumpy," Kingsley furrowed his brows.

"You so are," Lorenzo said. "But it's cute. You're cute— *ow!* Why did you have to bite me again?"

"Stop saying cheesy stuff or I'll keep biting you," Kingsley threatened.

"What did I do to deserve such a violent boyfriend?" Lorenzo sighed.

"Boyfriend... huh," Kingsley closed his eyes shut once again. "So, I didn't just dream last night's conversation. It really happened."

"It did. You're my boyfriend now. No take backs," Lorenzo said.

"Damnit, I was just about to kick you out after promising to call you," Kingsley joked.

"And then ghosting me later?"

"Obviously," Kingsley grinned. " *Ow* — why did *you* bite me now?"

"Because you're mean," Lorenzo answered.

"Is that how you talk to all your boyfriends, huh?" Kingsley 'tch-ed'.

"You're my first and only," Lorenzo replied. Kingsley turned his head back to look at Lorenzo, surprised by what he said.

"Wait, seriously?" Kingsley asked. "You haven't dated a guy before me?"

"I haven't dated anyone since my divorce," Lorenzo answered. "I went on dates and slept around a little but... that's it. I've always been a relationship oriented person but I never found anyone I liked enough to date. Not until now, at least."

"Wow," Kingsley was still shocked. "I can't believe I'm your first boyfriend."

"Hopefully you'll be my last too— Jesus Christ Reece stop biting me!"

***

my exams are over wuhuu

Chapter Forty Two

"—I really think Matt has a crush on Noelle so I'm planning on maybe teaming them up for my next assignment. Plus Matt is really good at history and Noelle might fail if she doesn't pick up her grades soon so it'll be like killing two birds with a single stone."

Kai was ranting about his students as the four men ate dessert. Roan was resting his cheek on his palm as he watched his husband attentively. Kai kept forgetting to eat from time to time as he spoke, and Roan either kept reminding him or fed him a few bites.

Lorenzo and Kingsley were more amused as they, too, listened to the excited new teacher. Kingsley couldn't help but focus on how Roan was giving Kai his undivided attention, like he always did no matter what the other man was talking about.

It had been a while since Kingsley saw his friends, so he planned to have dinner with them over at his penthouse. He figured it would also be a good time to officially introduce Lorenzo to them as his boyfriend. The man tried to cook on his own first, feeling weirdly motivated to have a homemade meal. But well... that was a disaster that thankfully did not result in him burning down his building.

He gave up and was going to order in, but Roan offered to come early and help with food. Obviously, Kingsley wasn't going to say no to that. Dinner went well, and now they were all eating the apple pie that Kai had made.

Once they were done, Roan and Kai stayed for some more time as all four of them sat in the living room and drank while talking. It was a nice, relaxed night, and Kingsley was glad to have the three people that meant the most to him under the same roof. He was also happy that they all got along well together.

Roan and Kai left around midnight, and Lorenzo stayed behind. Both of them were cleaning up in silence, and Kingsley licked his lower lip nervously as he realized how domestic their actions were.

"I really like your friends," Lorenzo said as Kingsley packed all the leftovers in Tupperware.

"Good. They like you too," Kingsley replied. He paused, before continuing, his voice hesitant. "What do you think of Roan and Kai?"

"I just said—"

"No, like, them together. What do you think of them as a couple?" Kingsley asked.

"They look great together," Lorenzo answered. "Really in love. Why do you ask?"

"I... I never admitted it but what they have is something I've always wanted too," Kingsley said softly. "I've seen them together for years and I... I always craved wanting someone to call my own even if I never said it out loud or pretended that I'm better off alone."

"You were just protecting yourself," Lorenzo said as he walked towards Kingsley, keeping a hand on his lower back. "And now you've finally let your guard down. You have no idea how proud I am of you for that."

"I'm really sorry, Enzo. I never apologized properly for lying to you and for potentially risking everything you've spent your life building. I could've ruined your life and I... I never would've forgiven myself had that happened."

Kingsley sat down on one of the dining table chairs. Lorenzo sighed, getting on his knees in front of Kingsley, holding his hand and keeping the other one on Kingsley's cheek, lightly grazing his skin as he looked at him with soft eyes.

"It wasn't your fault at all, Reece. I know I blamed you when I was angry, but I was wrong. I got involved with you fully knowing it could harm my career. It was on me, not you," Lorenzo paused. "As for the lying part... I get why you did it. The first thing I said after you told me was judge you and your abilities. So, I understand why you wanted to keep it quiet. I'm really sorry for the way I acted. If I could take it all back, I would in an instant. And I swear to never do it again."

"I think... I think we need to move past the apologies and monologues now," Kingsley said with a definite nod. "We both messed up, we both said sorry, and we both have forgiven each other. It's all done now. We've gone all over it and we're finally together now."

"And that's what matters," Lorenzo leant forward to press a gentle kiss on Kingsley's lips. "There was something I wanted to talk to you about."

"What is it?" Kingsley asked.

"If you're okay with it then... I'm ready to make our relationship public. We can wait or do it any way that you want," Lorenzo said. "But I'm ready."

"Uh," Kingsley blinked. "I don't want to announce our relationship."

"Oh," the hurt and shock on Lorenzo's face was immediately visible.

"I love you and you love me, that's all that matters. I want you to take me out on that date and I want you to kiss me when you drop me home. If some journalist wants to write an article on that then they're free to do so. Now that I don't work under you and our relationship won't get you fired... I can't care less about what the public or media thinks. I only care about you," Kingsley explained. If possible, Lorenzo looked even more surprised now than before.

"Wait, did you just say you lo—"

"Shut up," Kingsley muttered, making Lorenzo smile as he leant forward to kiss Kingsley once again.

"Always so grumpy," Lorenzo chuckled. "But I love you."

"You better," Kingsley shrugged lightly.

"I'm your boyfriend. And you love me," Lorenzo grinned, his teeth on display, making Kingsley roll his eyes playfully at the other man's excitement.

"No, I don't," Kingsley shook his head.

"Too late. You can't take it back now," Lorenzo held Kingsley's hand in his own, before bringing it to his lips and kissing it.

"You were never this cheesy when I worked with you," Kingsley's muttered. He was trying to put up a hard exterior, but he failed miserably as the corners of his lips turned upwards in a smile that gave away just how happy he was too.

"This is just the start, *mi cielo* ," Lorenzo smirked. "I'm going to show you just how much of a devoted lover I can be."

"Oh God," Kingsley's cheeks turned a faint shade of pink as he hid his face in his hands, unable to face Lorenzo now. "Nina, Miles and Anwar are going to lose their shit when they get to know we're dating."

"I didn't even think about the reaction of our colleagues," Lorenzo laughed.

"How about I bring you lunch on Monday and we eat in the office? Like old times?" Kingsley asked.

"That sounds amazing," Lorenzo replied. "Chinese?"

"Obviously."

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Kingsley couldn't help but feel nostalgic as he got out of his car and walked inside the familiar building. He smiled at the receptionist he hadn't seen in a
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while, who waved back at him. With the paper bags in his hand, Kingsley went inside the elevator and pressed the 17th floor button.

He tapped his foot to the elevator music he hadn't even realized he missed until then. Once he reached the floor, he took in a deep breath before walking out and entering his old office.

Everything was just how it was back when he worked there. Which shouldn't be that shocking considering it had only been a few months since he quit. It wasn't like the place was going to change in such a short amount of time. A few of his old co-workers looked surprised when they saw Kingsley, but they quickly made his way to him. After some small talk, he went over to his old desk.

Nina's eyes widened when she saw Kingsley, and then she immediately stood up to give him a hug. Anwar too, did the same, whereas Miles just patted his shoulder appreciatively with a smile. Kingsley kept the lunch he bought for his friends on Nina's desk, as they asked him what he was doing there.

"What? Can't I be a good friend and surprise you all with food?" Kingsley asked.

"That's unlike you but I'm not complaining about free food," Anwar shrugged, looking ready to dive in.

"I thought you were on a diet?" Nina rose a questioning eyebrow, making Anwar shrug once again. "Wow, just yesterday you were—"

Nina stopped talking once they saw Lorenzo leave his office. He was walking towards the four of them with a small smile on his face, his eyes focused on Kingsley and no one else. Kingsley, too, was returning the stare.

"Reece. Great to see you here again," Lorenzo said, his voice professional. Kingsley chuckled, knowing that Lorenzo was just playing around.

"You too, *sir* ," Kingsley replied with a smirk. His friends looked between the two with a confused expression. It was clear that there was something

behind their casual words, like an inside joke only they were privy to.

It was when Lorenzo took a couple more steps towards Kingsley, before pecking his lips that everyone around them almost dropped whatever they were holding in shock. Nobody said anything as the two men simply grinned at each other, expecting such a response. Their attitude still remained as nonchalant as ever, adding more to the comic feel.

"Lunch?" Kingsley said as he raised the paper bags still in his hand.

"After you," Lorenzo replied as he moved aside to let Kingsley walk ahead.

Kingsley winked cheekily at his friends before he started walking towards Lorenzo's office, with said boss following closely behind him.

***

one chapter + epilogue left to go

I'm taking ideas for bonus chapters so comment away!

Chapter Forty Three

"I think you should come with me to Javi's wedding," Lorenzo said out of the blue, almost making Kingsley choke on his burrito.

Kingsley coughed, before wiping his lips and looking up at his boyfriend, his wide eyes clearly showing the shock that he was feeling. Leave it to Lorenzo to choose the most random time to drop a bomb like this. They were currently at a tex-mex restaurant grabbing lunch on a Saturday. Lorenzo had stayed the previous night over at Kingsley's, and safe to say, both of them had worked up quite the appetite.

"Are you asking me or telling me?" Kingsley retorted.

"Force of habit, sorry," Lorenzo shook his head. " *Mi amor* , would you like to accompany me as my date to my brother's wedding next month?"

"You seriously want me to come with you?" Kingsley questioned, geniunely surprised with Lorenzo.

"I wouldn't have asked you if I didn't," Lorenzo shrugged casually, before taking a bite of his taco.

"So, essentially... you want me to meet your family," Kingsley hummed, his mind already imagining all the possible scenarios. Most of them were *not* good, making him shudder internally.

"I'll have to warn you that they're very loud, especially mamà and my brothers," Lorenzo said. "I know this might be a bit early so it's your decision. But I do want you to meet them eventually if you're not ready now. They're very important to me and so are you. I... I want them to meet and know the man that I love."

"Enzo..." Kingsley sighed. "I do want to meet them but..."

"But what?" Lorenzo asked softly. When Kingsley didn't say anything, Lorenzo leant forward, sliding his hand across the table they were seated at to keep it on top of Kingsley's, intertwining their fingers. "I know it's a big step, and you're still getting used to this whole... commitment thing. I'm scared too. The last time I was serious about being with somebody it didn't go well at all. I rushed things and I messed up. But I don't want to do that with you, so if you're unsure then you don't have to come with me. I understand and I promise I won't be upset."

"It's not that, I mean, it's that too but..." Kingsley trailed off, before exhaling deeply and looking at Lorenzo. "I'm not super good with parents. Cole's parents hated my guts, all they saw was a spoiled brat that spent all his time partying. Which wasn't exactly inaccurate at the time but... still, they didn't give me a chance. They had their preconceived notions that were set in stone."

"I promise you my parents aren't close minded like that," Lorenzo said reassuringly. "They're super protective of me, yeah, even though I'm a fully grown man now so they might grill you a little but... uh, they have heard a lot about you, and I know they want to get to know you better personally."

"Huh?" Kingsley blinked.

"I mean, I told Javi about you when he was visiting and then he told mamà because he absolutely cannot keep his mouth shut and she called me screaming about not telling her my love life and how the big city has changed me and it was a whole thing," Lorenzo chuckled. "My point is that they know how happy you make me, and that you gave me a second chance when I fucked up. That's what matters."

"I'll think about it," Kingsley stated with a nod.

"That's all I ask," Lorenzo smiled softly as he squeezed Kingsley's hand, before retreating it.

Kingsley couldn't help but focus at the loving look on Lorenzo's face, the way he stared at Kingsley with such tenderness in his eyes. It made

Kingsley's heart warm with affection, and brought a very familiar sensation in his gut.

Ugh, stupid butterflies , Kingsley thought.

"Okay. I thought about it and I want to go with you," Kingsley answered, making Lorenzo raise a brow.

"That was fast," Lorenzo said.

"You complaining?" Kingsley questioned, his boyfriend chuckled as he shook his head.

"Not at all, *cariño* ," Lorenzo replied. "But I do want you to be sure, there's no pressure of any kind. I won't be mad or disappointed if you choose to wait. Hell, I know I'll be intimidated if you ask me to meet your parents."

"Yeah, that's because you know who my parents are. Anyone would be intimidated," Kingsey scoffed. "I'm sure, Enzo."

Kingsley wasn't a hundred percent sure of whether he was ready to meet Lorenzo's family or not. But what he was sure about was that if there was anyone in the whole wide world that he would try to get over his worries and take a leap of faith for... it would be for the man sitting in front of him that was happily munching on some nachos.

Dealing with Kingsley's own insecurities wasn't an easy task, and he still had his fair share of doubts every now and then. But instead of fearing the worst possible scenario and avoiding any form of attachment— Kingsley was now actively trying to work through his issues.

With the help of therapy that he had recently started, he was beginning to understand that it wasn't just a bad break up with his ex that caused his attachment issues, but also his upbringing and the fact that his parents had abandoned him since he was an infant. That coupled with losing his only caregivers as an adolescent only messed up the idea of love and commitment in his head even more.

It was a process, and Kingsley knew that he wouldn't automatically stop being scared just because he was in love now. If anything, then at times it was even more terrifying. But what he did know was he had Lorenzo's support, that he had a man that was willing to listen to him and love him through his problems. He had faith in Lorenzo to not run, and that helped him not hide away either.

"Maybe we could take an extra few days off after the wedding and go some place?" Lorenzo asked, making Kingsley hum as he nodded.

"Where do you have in mind?"

"San Francisco?" Lorenzo suggested with a cheeky smile as Kingsley stared at him with a *'really?'* expression on his face, his lips pressed together in a thin line.

"If you think I'm taking vacation days to go to San Francisco then you have another thing coming," Kingsley muttered.

"Alright, alright," Lorenzo laughed, raising his hands in defense. "What about Paris?"

"Do not take me to Paris unless you plan to propose to me on top of the Eiffel tower," Kingsley replied.

"Noted," Lorenzo said with a smirk, making Kingsley widen his eyes slightly in surprise.

"I'm joking!" Kingsley clarified, and Lorenzo said nothing, but winked at his boyfriend cheekily. "I've always wanted to go to Asia."

"How about India?" Lorenzo questioned.

"Sounds good. I can ask Kai about places we can go to," Kingsley nodded, knowing that Kai's mother was Indian and he had been visiting the country since he was a little kid.

"It's done then," Lorenzo smiled. "First we watch my brother tie the knot and then we head off to India."

"Maybe we can take my dad's private jet," Kingsley suggested.

"Nah, too much unnecessary pollution. A normal flight would do," Lorenzo paused. "Business class, though."

"Ah, my climate conscious boyfriend that I adore so much," Kingsley said with a grin, making Lorenzo roll his eyes playfully.

"Eat your burrito before I eat you," Lorenzo muttered.

"Are you threatening me—" Kingsley paused for dramatic effect, "—with a good time?"

"No, I'm threatening you—" Lorenzo copied Kingsley's tone, "—with a *great* time."

"You're an idiot," Kingsley said as he broke into laughter.

"Now hurry up so that we can go back to my place and put these threats into action," Lorenzo grinned.

"Seriously?" Kingsley looked at Lorenzo with an amused expression. "You wanna have sex right after we eat Mexican food?"

"Huh," Lorenzo blinked. "Okay. Maybe we can cuddle up on the couch and watch that romcom whose trailer you liked."

"You mean the romcom that *you* liked," Kingsley corrected.

"Same thing," Lorenzo muttered.

Kingsley said nothing as he glanced at the other man, who he still couldn't believe was his boyfriend. It felt like just last week when he was lusting over him from the other end of the office, and just yesterday when they were secretly hooking up behind closed doors. But now they were out and about, and Lorenzo used every opportunity he got to show Kingsley how proud he was to be dating him.

That in turn helped Kingsley with his initial worries. Earlier Kingsley would supress all the issues that made him anxious. He would sweep them under the rug and convinced himself that since Lorenzo and he couldn't be together openly, that meant their relationship wasn't serious and he had nothing to be *tense* about. But when that changed... Kingsley wondered how it would affect his entire dynamic with Lorenzo.

The effect was significant, but for the better. Their relationship was growing, more so than ever before and every time Lorenzo held Kingsley's hand on the streets, it brought a glow to his face and a warmth to his insides. He felt like a schoolboy with his first crush, and the tiniest bits of affection that Lorenzo showed him made his heart flutter. Though he would never accept that out loud and would scoff at anyone's face if they were to point it out, of course.

Kingsley's guards were finally down, maybe not completely yet, but he was working to get there. And with Lorenzo by his side, he knew he would reach there sooner rather than later.

***

the end

I don't know know how I feel about this. The epilogue will be up soon. The last of the Tense series... ;-;

Epilogue

A few years later.

"We really don't have to go if you don't want to," Lorenzo said, a soft frown on his face as he stared at his boyfriend.

They were both in his car, parked outside of Kingsley's high school. It was Kingsley's reunion and he had been hesitant about going since the start. At first, he stated that he had no intention whatsoever of going. But he eventually started talking more and more about his years in school, his memories and the people that he missed.

Just two nights before the reunion, Kingsley said that he wanted to go. He wasn't expecting Lorenzo to go with him. He figured it would be too hard for him to take these days off from work on such short notice, but Lorenzo didn't want Kingsley to go alone. Especially when he knew how nervous he was about the entire ordeal. Which was rare considering how confident Kingsley usually was so there was no way in hell that Lorenzo was going to stay back.

Kingsley hadn't seen his friends from school in over half a decade. And his ex-boyfriend and ex-bestfriend in even more so. Kingsley claimed to be a hard ass that didn't care about his past anymore, but Lorenzo knew just how much his hometown meant to him. He always refused to go back, stating there was nothing left there for him.

But there was. Even if he was no longer in touch with the people there...the memories he made were still there. And they were just as important. Lorenzo wanted to be there for his lover, so he kept his hand on top of Kingsley's, gently squeezing it.

"Seriously, we can turn the car back around. We can go home, put on some crappy reality show and cuddle till we fall asleep," Lorenzo paused. "Or we can go in and meet your old friends. Bring up some nostalgia. I'd love to

hear all about your glory days from people other than Kai who I'm sure is a little biased in his story telling."

"I...I want to go in," Kingsley stated with a firm nod, before turning to face Lorenzo. "Promise you won't leave me if someone tells you embarassing stuff about me?"

" *Mi amor* , I've been with you for almost six years now," Lorenzo chuckled. "You should know I'm not that easily scared. If your snoring can't push me away then nothing can."

"I do *not* snore!" Kingsley huffed, looking away from Lorenzo once again.

"You so do. I literally recorded it and made you listen," Lorenzo said.

"That video could've very easily been doctored. I'll have my lawyers check it and then give you a response in ten to twenty business years," Kingsley retorted. "Besides, if you have such an issue with my *alleged* snoring then you can always sleep in the guest room."

"I never said I had a problem with it. It's kind of cute actually, it's not loud and your nose flutters in the cutest way possible. And it's only when you work overtime and are super tired," Lorenzo pointed out, making Kingsley's cheeks turn a light shade of pink.

"I will bite you and it won't be sexy like last night," Kingsley muttered.

"Hot," Lorenzo winked playfully. "Don't get me turned on or you might have to show me all the secret hook-up spots in your old school."

"Sure," Kingsley smirked, taking full advantage of the situation. "I'll show you all the spots where I used to go with my boyfriends and suc—"

"Okay, okay, got it," Lorenzo cut him off, just how Kingsley was expecting it. "We going in now or what?"

"Yeah, we are," Kingsley grinned, already feeling better as Lorenzo helped him calm his nerves down.

Both the men got out of the car and started walking towards the entrance of the school. Kingsley held onto Lorenzo's hand, his grip firm as they walked in through the door. The reunion had started over an hour ago, so the party was in full swing. Kingsley took in the sight of his old gym hall, feeling nostalgic as he remembered all the P.E. classes he skipped or spent watching his crushes play ball in shorts.

Kingsley couldn't help but smile, before turning to face Lorenzo, who was already watching him.

"Thank you," Kingsley whispered.

"You can show me your gratitude with a kiss," Lorenzo replied cheekily, making Kingsley grin as he leant forward to press his lips against Lorenzo's in a deep kiss.

After doing that, Kingsley pulled away and dropped Lorenzo's hand, making him furrow his brows in confusion as Kingsley walked up to the makeshift stage. He grabbed onto the mic as he looked at the crowd, before bringing back his signature smirk.

"Afterparty at my place," Kingsley announced. There was laughter and cheers in the audience, his old batchmates obviously remembering who Kingsley was and his infamous party mansion.

Kingsley walked back to Lorenzo with a wide smile on his face, his boyfriend just looked amused as he raised a questioning brow.

"A party huh?" Lorenzo asked.

"You wanted to hear about my glory days," Kingsley answered. "Might as well see them too."

"You always— oh hey, there's Roan and Kai," Lorenzo stated as he saw the two husbands in the crowd, surrounded by a few men that Lorenzo didn't recognize.

Kingsley grabbed Lorenzo's hand once again as the two walked towards the group. A few of them were immediately yelling Kingsley's name and hugging him, complaining about how long it's been and how good it was to see him again. Some smiled politely at Lorenzo while the others shook his hand. Overall, they seemed nice.

"This is Scott, Marco, Vaughn and Parker. They were the were dumb jocks back in highschool that drank all my alcohol, passed out on my couch and trashed all my furniture," Kingsley grinned as he introduced the group. "You already know the lovebirds and uh, this is Derek and Cole."

Kingsley knew for sure he'd run into the two at the reunion. Even though Kingsley wasn't affected by them anymore, it was still weird seeing them again after so long. Plus, if Kingsley was anything— then it was petty. He was the farthest thing from being zen, and he didn't let go of grudges that easily.

Lorenzo kept his hand at Kingsley's lower back reassuringly as he greeted everyone. Sensing a little bit of tension after Kingsley's introduction, Lorenzo turned to Roan as he spoke up.

"Did you bring the kids?" Lorenzo asked. Roan and Kai had adopted two siblings a year or so ago, and they absolutely adored them. Their face immediately lit up at the mention of the kids.

"Yeah, they're with my parents," Roan answered with a smile. "Leo was complaining about the drive but he seems to have settled in okay."

"I have to take the kids shopping before their school starts," Kingsley hummed.

He loved his self proclaimed niece and nephew, and used every opportunity to spoil them. Especially ever since he and Lorenzo had a very long discussion and decided they both wanted to be child free.

"Okay, but with a budget this time," Kai stepped in. "Last time Maya came back with half the toy store and—"

"You're no fun," Kingsley pouted slightly, making Kai roll his eyes.

"It's called being a parent," he replied.

"I always thought Roan would be the stricter dad," Kingsley said. Before Kai could respond and continue their bickering that would definitely take up most of the night, Kingsley continued. "I'll go call Dorothy to tell her about the party and to set stuff up. I also need to spike the punch."

Kingsley smirked as he patted the pocket of his suit jacket, where he had a flask hidden. Roan rolled his eyes and the others laughed, remembering how Kingsley was always the one to spike the punch at their school dances and prom.

Kingsley called his caretaker to let her know that there was going to be a party at the mansion in an hour or so. Dorothy was one of the oldest members of the staff there, so she knew what all she needed to do immediately. Kingsley smiled as he hung up the call, turning around only to come face to face with his ex-boyfriend.

He had ignored looking at Cole and Derek when he was talking to the group, simply pretending that he wasn't aware of their existence. It was something Kingsley was great at, even if some people considered it immature.

"Hey Reece," Cole said with a small smile.

"Hi Cole," Kingsley replied calmly. "Is there are a reason you're cornering me in a...corner?"

"I just wanted to talk," Cole sighed. "It's been a very long time, Reece. Can you at least hear me out?"

"Okay. Speak." Kingsley folded his hands in front of his chest as he stared at Cole with a blank expression on his face.

"I swear I did not cheat on you. I did break up with you because long distance was just...difficult and I needed the physical aspect. Then you cut

me off completely even though I wanted to be friends and I missed you so much," Cole frowned. "So did Derek and we just started spending more time together and..."

"You missed me so much that you fucked my best friend?" Kingsley rose an eyebrow. He wasn't even mad about what happened anymore, he didn't care much but the small sadistic part of his heart was amused at Cole's explanation and his slightly panicked expression.

"That's not...I mean...I don't know how to explain," Cole trailed off.

"Cole, you're happy with Derek. Shit worked out with you both and that's great. But I don't want to be part of your lives anymore. It's as simple as that. People tell me that it's been a decade and I should forgive and move on but...I have. I did it without getting closure from you or Derek. I don't give a fuck anymore about you both," Kingsley said. "It's you who needs to move on from wanting to justify yourself to me. I'm over it, Cole, it's about time you stop caring about my validation too."

Kingsley glanced to the side, his eyes meeting Lorenzo who was staring at him with a concerned look. Kingsley winked at him, indicating that he was okay and that Lorenzo didn't need to worry about him. That made Lorenzo look slightly relieved, as he smiled before turning back to the others that he was talking to.

"Wow, um..." Cole paused, probably unsure of what to say. "You're right, I guess. Sorry I bothered you."

"This apology I can accept," Kingsley smirked. Cole blinked at him, before letting out a chuckle.

"You haven't changed at all," he said.

"I have, actually," Kingsley smiled as he glanced at Lorenzo momentarily, who was laughing at something that Kai was saying. "And it's a good thing."

Kingsley didn't wait for Cole's response as he started walking towards his boyfriend. Lorenzo's eyes immediately lit up when Kingsley arrived, and he wrapped an arm around his waist. Kingsley loved the way Lorenzo showed his affection even after years of being together. It made Kingsley's heart skip a beat each time, a cliché that Kingsley was too unbothered to deny any longer.

Kingsley kissed Lorenzo's cheek, before bringing his lips to the other man's ear and whispering.

"Do you still want me to show you my old hook-up spots, sir?"

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fin.

I don't even know what to say as I post this final chapter. It's incredibly hard to say goodbye to all my boys and the little universe that I've created. I'm going to miss them with all my heart.

Thank you to everyone that has read King's Guard and the Tense series. Your constant support is what kept me motivated to keep writing. I love you all so much.

I'll be focusing on *In Another Era* now, and will hopefully be publishing a new book soon. If you want to support me and read my exclusive book *A Girlfriend's Other Boyfriend* , then you can do so on Patreon or Ko-fi.

Until next time.

With all the love in the world,
Kara.

Bonus Chapter - The Interview

"So."

"So."

"College is over now, huh?" Kai said.

Kai, Roan, and Kingsley, along with another friend of theirs, Jeremy, were at Kingsley's penthouse post their convocation ceremony. They were now officially college degree holders, ready to step into the adult world.

"Can't believe we're going to have to...work full time now," Jeremy said. "A nine to five corporate job that will suck out our entire will to live. No more frat parties. No more binge drinking and flirting with a different chick every night."

"Um—"

"Or flirting with guys," Jeremy continued as he glanced at the three men he was sitting with.

"Speak for yourselves, I have another certification to get so my days of studying aren't over," Kai shrugged.

"Fair," Jeremy hummed, "this just applies to Ro and I then."

"You forgetting that I'm here too?" Kingsley spoke up.

"Yeah but...you don't really need to work. Your parents are loaded," Jeremy pointed out as he looked around the massive living room.

The 80-inch television, a shelf full of every video game you could imagine, a fluffy rug that probably cost more than the others' one month of rent; Kingsley's penthouse was, in the simplest of words, a *very* expensive-looking bachelor pad.

"I don't plan on sitting in my bed all day and burning through my parents' money," Kingsley muttered.

"Then you can just ask them for a job," Jeremy shrugged. "Sit in a corner office and boss people around."

Kingsley frowned slightly, and he couldn't help but feel offended that his friend thought about him the way he did. Sure, he had money. But he didn't want to be a freeloader for the rest of his life. He did want to work and make a career for himself. Even if it wasn't *necessary* for him to do so, and he had much easier options, thanks to nepotism, Kingsley did want to do something on his own.

"Shut up, Jer, you literally took your mom with you to your dentist appointment last week," Roan interrupted, sensing some tension in the room.

"Dentists are scary," Jeremy muttered in his defense before taking a long gulp of his beer.

Even though Kingsley had stopped throwing parties, he invited a few people over who ended up calling even more. Soon enough, there was loud music playing and alcohol flowing in his penthouse. He was glad that he was the only one that lived on the top floor.

Kingsley tried to enjoy the party, but what Jeremy had said earlier that evening kept nagging him. Kingsley never really doubted his self-esteem, if anything he was always bordering on overconfidence. But Jeremy's words made him wonder if he was good or smart enough to do something... *anything* on his own.

"Tequila for your thoughts?" Roan asked as he handed Kingsley a shot glass. Both of them downed the drink, sending a familiar burning sensation down their throat.

"What Jeremy said—"

"He was just being an idiot," Roan cut him off. "Don't pay him any mind."

"I know, but...I mean he's not exactly wrong," Kingsley sighed, "I probably will just end up asking my dad for a job."

"Do you want to do that?"

"Not really," Kingsley answered.

"Then stop sulking and start applying for jobs. It's that simple," Roan said. "I know a few places that are hiring. SoulTech, Kaufman Enterprises, Salazar Tech...these are just the ones I can think of at the top of my head so start looking into them."

"Aye, aye captain," Kingsley replied with a firm nod.

"Idiot," Roan muttered before getting up and walking away from Kingsley to go towards Kai.

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Kingsley procrastinated for a few days but eventually decided to listen to Roan. He figured it was probably worth a shot, what was the worst that could happen, right? So, he applied to the jobs that Roan had listed and found some more openings on his own. A week or so passed and he heard back from around half of them.

There were a couple of online rounds, and then finally his first in-person interview was scheduled with the founder of Salazar Tech.

Kingsley wasn't nervous, he had always been great with authority figures. So, he walked into the waiting room with all the confidence in the world. Unbothered about the outcome. He was more interested in the job at SoulTech anyway, so he was considering this just as a trial that would prepare him for the job that he really wanted.

"Mr. Kingsley? Mr. Salazar will see you now."

Kingsley got up from the couch, following the woman to the conference room. She wished him good luck, before knocking on the door and then
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moving aside. Kingsley grabbed the handle, opened the door, and took a step in.

Kingsley hadn't done much research on the role or the company when he applied for the job. He should've done that, but he just couldn't be bothered. After all, he wasn't even serious about it. He was just giving it a shot for the heck of it.

When he got to know the founder and CEO of the start-up would be the one conducting his interview, he was fully prepared to sit in front of a stereotypical middle-aged bald businessman in an overly expensive suit. What he absolutely did not expect was...Lorenzo Salazar to be a literal Adonis.

Kingsley couldn't even pinpoint the first thing he noticed about the man, his mind was all over the place as his eyes took in the sweet sight in front of him.

His sharp nose, his sculpted jaw, his pink lips, and the soft smile on them. The light stubble that somehow made his face look even more defined. Before this, Kingsley thought he preferred clean shaven men but after seeing Lorenzo Salazar...that changed in an instant. Not only that, but his neat dress sense just made him all the more attractive.

Kingsley was somewhat in a daze as Lorenzo introduced himself and stood up to shake his hand. All he could do was nod stiffly as they shook hands. His mind wandering to the different body parts that Lorenzo could wrap those long fingers around. Lorenzo raised a questioning brow, definitely assuming that Kingsley was nervous, but little did he know... He quickly told Kingsley to take a seat so that they could begin the interview process.

"Let me start with the basics here...why did you apply to Salazar Tech?" Lorenzo asked.

Kingsley was still in gay panic, but he managed to pull himself out of it enough to be able to answer the other man's question.

"Because I want a job?" Kingsley replied. He mentally face-palmed himself the moment those words left his mouth. He couldn't believe he really said that.

Lorenzo blinked, his face devoid of any expression as he stared at Kingsley. Kingsley gulped, it took him a second to realize what he had just said. Finally, Lorenzo chuckled, and Kingsley breathed out in relief.

"I've got to say that's the most blunt answer I've ever gotten to this question," Lorenzo remarked. "But once again, why Salazar Tech in particular?"

After forty minutes of back-and-forth questions, it seemed like the interview was finally coming close to an end. Lorenzo asked all sorts of questions, from technical to general ones regarding Kingsley's work experience and his years in college. Kingsley felt he did a good job answering them, but only time would tell how good.

"Okay, I think we're mostly done here," Lorenzo said as he closed the file in front of him that had Kingsley's resume in it. "Are there any questions that you have regarding the workplace or the job description?"

Are you open to fucking your employees? Kingsley wanted to ask. But for very obvious reasons...he didn't.

Even though Kingsley initially didn't even care about getting the job, now he had some incentive to make him a little more serious about it. He still didn't give enough shits to have questions, but he wanted to show Lorenzo that he was interested and dedicated.

"Can you tell me a little about the goals that you've set for the company for this year?" Kingsley asked in his serious business voice.

Lorenzo nodded, seeming content with Kingsley's question before answering it in depth.

"I have one last thing to discuss with you," Lorenzo began. "I've had a couple of recent graduates that started here but left pretty soon to join

bigger companies. So I want you to convince me why I should hire you."

"If that's been the case—" Kingsley paused "—then shouldn't you convince me to stay if I get hired?"

Lorenzo raised his eyebrows in surprise, he was probably expecting Kingsley to go on about how loyal he was and other similar qualities. The last thing he expected was for the young man in front of him to turn the question around on him.

Lorenzo was impressed. Even though Kingsley didn't have as much work experience and there were other candidates with better grades...there was something about Reece Kingsley that intrigued Lorenzo. He gave off an air of confidence and maturity way beyond his years. He seemed a little nervous in the beginning, but as soon as the interview started— he was on point with every question that Lorenzo asked.

Lorenzo believed he was a decent judge of character and that he could differentiate between a good person and a bad one, which was something important that he was looking for in his employees. This was why he wanted to do the last round of interviews himself. But Kingsley confused him. Lorenzo felt like he just couldn't analyze him enough to make any kind of assumption about him. And that frustrated Lorenzo.

When Lorenzo was at work— he maintained himself as professionally as he possibly could. He was extremely business-minded, and there was nothing that could usually sidetrack him. But with Kingsley...a part of him couldn't help but think from different perspectives.

Lorenzo hadn't missed the way Kingsley's eyes were taking him in right at the moment he entered the room. The only reason Kingsley didn't notice that Lorenzo was doing the same was because he was too distracted due to the initial shock.

Even though Lorenzo knew never to mix business with pleasure— he was still human. And he couldn't help but internally admire how gorgeous the man in front of him was. Kingsley's long hair looked so soft that Lorenzo immediately wanted to run his fingers through them. His plump lips seemed

so kissable and the *fuck me* eyes that he was giving Lorenzo made his dick twitch in his pants.

Had they met under different circumstances...Lorenzo would be all over him, ready to take him home and *appreciate* him all night long.

"Interesting," Lorenzo finally said. He got up from his chair, bringing his hand forward for the other man to shake. "I think this concludes the interview. I'll be staying in touch with you."

The last sentence brought a hint of a smirk to Kingsley's lips, as he gripped Lorenzo's hand firmly. Their eyes were fixed on one another's, and the handshake lasted longer than what would usually be considered normal. If there was anyone else in the room, they would've without fail noticed the thick air and sexual tension that was flowing between the two men.

"I'd *really* like that, sir."

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Later that night, Kingsley had an email from Lorenzo Salazar himself.

He got the job.

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comment what else you'd like to read as bonus chapters!
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Bonus Chapter - Too Old To Be On My Knees

"Maya! Come back here!" Kingsley yelled, watching as the young girl ran down the aisle. "Roan is going to kill me if I lose his daughter."

"Probably," Lorenzo shrugged casually.

"Uh, hello? Help, please? Go chase after her," Kingsley ordered, making Lorenzo chuckle as he motioned forward. Kingsley sighed in relief when he saw Leo walking towards them with his younger sister in his arms.

"I told you not to bring her to the mall without her leash," Leo joked.

"Maya, sweetie, if you stay with us then I'll get you that limited edition remote control car you wanted, okay?" Kingsley spoke as he bent down on his knees to face her. Maya hummed, her expression thoughtful as if she was contemplating the idea.

"Reece! You cannot bribe children like this!" Lorenzo exclaimed.

"But I'm her uncle, it's my job to spoil—"

"Kai and Roan are going to be mad if you—"

"Uncle Enzo, Leo," Maya cut both of them. "This is between Uncle King and I. Uncle King, I accept your deal."

Maya and Kingsley shook hands, professional expressions on their face before Kingsley broke, flashing a grin and swooping Maya to sit on top of his shoulders as they headed to the next store.

Kingsley had to pretty much beg Roan and Kai to let him take the kids out. The last time he did so, he may have gone just a tiny bit overboard and the two siblings went back home with roughly fifteen shopping bags each.

Kingsley made sure to keep the receipts to himself since he knew the husbands would try to return the gifts.

He ended up getting a very long lecture by them to not spoil the kids. But what choice did Kingsley have? He and Lorenzo had decided that they were going to be childfree. Lorenzo did not have any nieces and nephews yet, though Javi's wife was pregnant with twins so there were soon going to be more little ones that Kingsley could be the best Uncle to.

So this time, after reassuring his friends that he won't buy the kids the entire mall, they agreed on the condition that Lorenzo tags along too. Knowing that the older man would keep his boyfriend in check.

The four spent hours at the mall, going from one store to another before stopping at the arcade. Kingsley and Leo were playing air hockey, and the older man grunted in frustration when he lost three matches in a row. Leo smiled victoriously before taking Maya to one of the bear claw machines she wanted to try out.

Kingsley glanced at Lorenzo, flashing him a challenging look.

"Game? Whoever wins gets to choose where we go for vacation next," Kingsley said. "And also the winner tops tonight."

"You're on," Lorenzo agreed, ecstatic about the deal after seeing just how terrible Kingsley was at playing.

However, much to Lorenzo's surprise, as if a sudden switch was flicked—Kingsley was destroying his ass. Figuratively, and he quite literally would too later that night if the match kept going like this.

In the end, Lorenzo ended up losing. The man stared at the scoreboard in shock, he really couldn't figure out how it happened until he saw the sly smirk on his boyfriend's face.

"Did you just...cheat?" Lorenzo questioned, making Kingsley gasp dramatically.

"How dare you," Kingsley exhaled lowly. "I did not cheat! I... hustled you."

"Hustled?"

"Made you think I was horrible by intentionally losing against Leo so that you would accept my challenge," Kingsley explained. Lorenzo blinked in confusion, before gently shaking his head at the other man.

"I can't believe I got hustled by my boyfriend," Lorenzo said. "They were right. It really do be your own."

"You're too old to talk in memes, babe. Leave that to Gen Z," Kingsley retorted.

"Did you just call me old?"

"Oh no, your age has started affecting your hearing too. Don't worry, I won't leave you for a younger, hotter man. At least not yet..."

"I'm only thirty-two!" Lorenzo rolled his eyes, knowing very well that Kingsley was just teasing him. He had gotten used to the man's sense of humor in the years that they had been together. "You're going to be thirty next year too, you know?"

"Don't say that, I'm going to be twenty-nine forever," Kingsley narrowed his eyes, glaring at the dark-haired man.

"Sure, *mi delirante adicto al crack de un novio* ," said Lorenzo. Kingsley frowned, even though he had been learning bits and pieces of Spanish since being with Lorenzo, he was nowhere near fluent.

"Wha—"

"My delusional crackhead of a boyfriend," Leo translated as he walked up to the two older men.

"What's a delusional crackhead?" Maya asked innocently, making Lorenzo widen his eyes slightly in panic as Leo tried to control a laugh. Kingsley just passed Lorenzo a glare before smiling at the little girl.

"Let's go get dinner now, okay kiddo? What do you wanna eat?" Kingsley changed the topic.

"Pizza?"

"Pizza it is."

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"Alright, so what place do you have in mind?" Lorenzo asked once the two were settled in their bed.

"Huh?" Kingsley asked, his eyes still fixed on his laptop. He got some last minute work the moment they reached home, hampering his plans to get down and dirty.

Cons of being the boss. Though Kingsley had grown to love his new job.

He remembered when he was still working for Lorenzo, and he knew that things would've been much simpler for him if he just quit. He may not have needed the job to help him financially, but doing something on his own without the backing of his family was important for his self esteem at the time.

He had cruised easily in life with his privilege, and he had seen the attitude of his peers around him that had even an inkling of how well off Kingsley was. Sure, nobody knew who Kingsley's father exactly was, but they had an idea that he was ultra rich from his penthouse and car. They always thought he'd simply run off to daddy for work after college, but that was the last thing Kingsley had wanted to do back then.

He wanted to stand on his own two feet, which was why he didn't simply quit his job the moment he and Lorenzo started hooking up.

"Our next vacation spot," Lorenzo said. "Did you forget all about what you hustled me today for? Having trouble recalling recent events, Reece? And you were calling *me* old?"

"Oh shut up," Kingsley muttered. "I was thinking we could go to Paris."
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"Paris?" Lorenzo chuckled. "I remember you saying something along the lines of never taking you to Paris unless I plan on proposing to you on top of the Eiffel tower."

Kingsley's eyes widened as he gulped, hoping that Lorenzo wouldn't notice his reaction. But luck wasn't on his side.

"...Reece?"

"What? Nothing. Nevermind. We should, uh, we should go to Canada," Kingsley retorted.

"I thought you said the niceness of Canadians makes you nauseous and you would never go back after you broke your arm on your business trip there?" Lorenzo questioned.

Kingsley cursed internally for having a boyfriend that actually paid attention to what he said. And even going as far as remembering and quoting it later.

Ugh.

"I like their...maple syrup?"

"Reece..." Lorenzo frowned. It was clear that something was not right. "What's going on, *cariño* ?"

Kingsley sighed as he kept his laptop on the bedside table. His heart rate was suddenly off the roof and his palms were beginning to sweat. He would've thought he was having a cardiac arrest, but he knew there was a different reason for his nervousness.

"Uh...nothing?"

"Talk to me, baby, what's wrong?" Lorenzo questioned again, his voice soft as he began to get worried.

"Nothing's wrong! You know what? Fuck it," Kingsley mumbled as he got out of the bed, startling Lorenzo.

Before the older man even had the time to process what was happening, Kingsley went to their shared walk-in closet. Lorenzo was about to follow him in but Kingsley came out just a few seconds later, one of his arms behind his back.

"What— I— are you okay?" Lorenzo asked, standing up as he closed the distance between him and Kingsley.

"You had been dropping hints for a while, but I...I never reciprocated to them, so I understand why you stopped," Kingsley began.

"What are you on about?"

"And then I started dropping hints, but you were too dense to get them."

"Excuse me?"

"I know you didn't want to scare me by bringing it up again," Kingsley let out a dry laugh as he thought about the massive argument they had when Lorenzo first brought up the idea of getting hitched years ago. "And I admit I was an ass about it."

"You're the one kinda scaring me right now," Lorenzo mumbled, not having a single clue of what was happening. "Reece, what are you saying? Be straight with me, please."

"No, I'll be gay with you," Kingsley retorted. Lorenzo passed him a look as if saying ' *really?* ', making the brunette shrug casually. "And I'd like to be very gay with you for a very long time. Preferably our entire lives."

"Wait—"

"Lorenzo Andrés Salazar," Kingsley started, getting down on one knee as he brought the velvet box forward, popping it open to reveal a platinum band. "The moment I saw you for the very first time, I knew that one day I would get on my knees for you."

"Reece..."

"Granted that was because I wanted to suck you off, and I know this doesn't sound very romantic which was why I wanted to do it on top of the Eiffel tower because then at least the ambience would—"

"You're rambling, love."

"Yes, right, sorry," Kingsley shook his head. "What I meant to say was that you showed me that love is not something to fear. That being vulnerable with the right person can be the most beautiful thing in the world. I know that I've been...that I've been difficult. I close up and shut down but you have been so patient with me, Enzo. I really did want to wait, I wanted to plan this out and make it perfect. Maybe do something cliché like dropping the ring in a champagne glass or whatever, but I don't think I have the same patience as you, I'm afraid."

"This *is* perfect," Lorenzo whispered. " *You* are perfect. Perfect friend. Perfect lover. Perfect fool."

"Then let's hope I can be a perfect husband too," Kingsley grinned, before clearing his throat. " *Prometo amarte hasta mi último aliento. ¿Quieres casarte conmigo?* "

"Did you just ask me to marry you in Spanish? How long have you been planning this?" Lorenzo questioned, a wide smile on his face.

"A little while," Kingsley replied, mirroring his expression. "You know you gotta answer sometime today, right? I'm getting old babe, my knees are about to give out soon."

"Of course I'll marry you, Reece, you could drive me to court right now and I'd marry you," Lorenzo said. "Though please don't do that because I do want a big fat wedding. Ma would kill us otherwise."

Kingsley chuckled as he took the band out of the box, sliding it on Lorenzo's ring finger. Lorenzo grabbed Kingsley's hand as he pulled him up, connecting their lips in a deep kiss. By the time they parted for breath, Kingsley's eyes were glossy.

"I'm so lucky to have met you," Kingsley whispered, his voice tender as he rested his forehead against Lorenzo's.

"You know what I think, *mi amor* ? Our good luck has just begun."

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Hello my lovelies! I know I'm super late with this long awaited bonus chapter so please do forgive me. Hope you liked it!

I keep reading a lot of comments about why Kingsley didn't just quit his job so that he could pursue things with Lorenzo, I wanted to clarify that with this chapter. Apart from his self esteem, he also had severe commitment/attachment issues at the time. Resigning just for Lorenzo would've been the last thing on his mind as he was scared of being in a relationship with him in the first place.

Also! For those that don't know— I have 3 exclusive books on my Patreon that aren't on Wattpad. One of them is complete, while the other two are ongoing as of now! I'll post the teasers in the next chapter so do give it a look!

I've also been trying to post more on my instagram— my user there is karaflynnofficial, all my links are in my bio.

All the love,
Kara

Mini Series

Hello!

I'm writing an exclusive mini series featuring characters from Tense, King's Guard, Delicate, Behind The Limelight, Taste of Iron and Nothing But Hate— to give you a sneak peak into their lives in the future and how their worlds crossover!

Even if you haven't read all the books, you can still understand what's happening.

I wanted to try something new and experimental so it's a fast paced story, with each chapter in a different book's POV. For example, the first part is in Tense's POV, the second part in King's Guard's, and so on.

You can read the first chapter for free on Wattpad, as well as some teasers from the next parts. You can find the book titled 'Crossover Mini Series' in my list of books.

The full mini series is available only on my Patreon (including many other perks like exclusive books, early access to chapters, bonus content etc).

Link in bio!

Happy reading! Love y'all.

Teasers

Hi! As you all may know, I post some books on Patreon that I do not on Wattpad.

I have three books there and no tiers as of now so you can pledge any amount that you want. What I make on Patreon goes directly towards my college tuition, so your support is a great help! The link is in my bio. Here are the excerpts!

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My Girlfriend's Other Boyfriend [completed]

"You know what would be really funny?"

"What?"

"If we slept with each other."

When Cory decided to surprise his sick girlfriend on Valentine's day, he ended up finding her in bed with another guy. Disappointed, but not surprised, considering this wasn't his first time getting cheated on- Cory shrugged off the incident and decided to move on.

When he runs into his ex-girlfriend's other ex-boyfriend at the gym- the last thing he expected was to become friends, let alone fall in love with him. But life's full of surprises, isn't it?

[p.s. the book is at chapter forty six, and about to get completed]

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Trouble In Threes [on-going] [bxbxb] [spin off]

Still suffering from the brunt of an old toxic relationship, Kaleb hates the idea of being tied down. Stuck between a cold boss that keeps giving him mixed signals, and his best friend's brother that is too blunt about wanting him, read how Kaleb navigates his growing attraction towards the two men.

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Torn Between Tides [on-going]

Colt goes to a college swimming tournament to support his beta's younger brother, and ends up leaving with so much more. In a twist of fate, Colt found himself entangled in a web of temptation that he neither wanted nor needed— one of a fated mate.

Can the seemingly ordinary college student unravel the Alpha's resolve? Can Roman reduce the mighty Colt to his knees in this whirlwhind of lust and longing?

Lurking beneath the surface lies another question: Is there more to Roman than what meets the eye? A secret that could reshape the desire that binds them.

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